

VANCOUVER SPEAKING: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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Vancouver Speaking No. 1

I don't understand why they kept calling me Vancouver in the first place, after some British sea captain who was one of the first to drop anchor in my waters I suppose. Today it would be some inspiring Salish name, to express respect for some first rights, indigenous, aboriginal native nation, possibly in chinook jargon, maybe Sasquatch Wawa. Well 'Vancouver' is better than Gastown or Granville anyway, although after my birth I was still called Granville by the first tourist businessmen. Sometime in the not too distant future they'll glom onto something then more fashionable and talk that up.

I always had a mix of people from different parts of the world, starting with the British and Scandahoovian crewmen from the ships that would drop anchor and load lumber here, Japanese and Chinese and all the others would come off the ships and you'd find them moseying around town, nosing in and out of the beer parlors and down the streets maybe patronizing some of the better known whore houses that soon sprang up around Chinatown and just east of Main street which was the main drag in town during my youth.

I was born officially in 1886 although there were lumber mills operating on the north shore of Burrard Inlet years before that. Some of the men working there could be a pretty rough crowd, but what can you expect if you consider the conditions they worked and lived under. You should hear Charlie Smith's account of it, who I'll introduce a bit later.

But I was young then myself and youth seems to accept and put up with quite a lot. So anyway it was 1886, deep in the Victorian era, which I never considered or thought of at all in my youth. Neither its overarching social history, art styles, or the world economy of which we were a part. It's quite true that we were all more influenced by events in America than Great Britain. Seattle is what I compared myself to and not Victoria, where the provincial government hung out. I suppose it was international corporations and local wheelers and dealers who constituted the real provincial government as far as Vancouverites were concerned--right from the start.

So I'm a middle aged city now, about a hundred a fifty years old, more or less, and I just keep growing and growing. I've pretty well filled up the lower Fraser Valley today with the suburbs and the suburban towns. First of all Burnaby, then Surrey and Lulu Island, and Coquitlam and Richmond. None of them to my liking.

I used to stick my nose into Yat Sing's booze shop down around Prior Avenue. That used to be where Pat's Liquor shop operated, too. All of them were down there. He did fairly well with all the Chinese around there but there are more prohibitionists later on. There were loggers and longshoremen too. I think Pat had some private arrangement with the police but I didn't look into that too carefully. You'd buy a bottle there or you could sip their products in the restaurant, too. There were some other booze shops and small tea shops around there.

Well, I grew up around the water, around Burrard Inlet. It was then my backbone and I've got to say it was like a connection to the rest of the world, a lifeline. If I ever felt depressed by the chauvinism and provincialism we had among some of those living in me, I'd turn to the sea and it gave me a feeling of openness, expansiveness, yes it did. I'm sure some of those living here felt similarly even if they couldn't see the sea itself; it was a main thing of our existence. Lumber and logs and prairie wheat flowed out on ships in our harbor and manufactured items came in. Oh God, it was lovely, and a great many of my people felt that too.

You think a city doesn't have feelings, that it's just the experiences and emotions of those who currently live there. Well, maybe so but I know what I feel and what has passed through me. Don't you think? There are some of my districts which today are a hundred years old or older. Don't you think that those buildings have taken on some of the activities and feelings of the people who lived in them? Of course they have. Everyone knows that, if you think about it. That's why losing old and much used buildings has such a tragic feel to it, you're losing not just buildings but the lives of the people who lived in them. The trouble is that I'm not able to save them, none of them. You think you have when some city council passes some historical preservation law, but councils change and the real estate interests are right in there again working to devastate what's briefly been saved. There have been a number of books and photo collections of older parts of the city recently. I was quite proud of them when they began to appear, about fifty years ago. They usually attempt to save the view and sometimes the feeling of what various districts once

were like. Nostalgia you say? Well, what the hell, why not; if something has been part of your life and is now lost why not nostalgia. It applies everywhere. Yes, it's true when I was a younger city, all that we were part of was growing up, it all seemed fine, progress and modernization people said. But as I get older I miss the older hotels and the remaining docks and even factories and the street scenes though admittedly they weren't always that great to be a part of. God knows how I'll feel a century from now. I suppose that the buildings that went up in the decades before World War One were what I think of as uniquely me. The old CPR station down on Cordova, the Sun Tower, the docks, the wharves of the Union Steamships dock, what a place for partings and returns that was. Also the BC Electric Building on Hastings and Carrall with its trams that ran out into the Valley. And of course the old Post Office on Hastings and Granville which was our pride and joy.

Hastings Street from Granville to Main was initially the main drag and so was Main Street. Granville had that white marble retail store at Georgia and Granville and the more pricey shops, Birks Jewelers and such. It got to be a rather snotty locale. That and the Georgia Hotel and the old Vancouver Hotel and the West End apartments and rooming houses. In 1910-1912 the Hudson's Bay Company put up a very fancy five story department store on Hastings and Georgia. One of the very first in the city. That was really something. It was a pretty hectic and memorable youth. For sure it was.

Our conservatives really were conservatives, ready and able to reassure the wealth and the power of those who held it, that they would continue to be the top gods, although there soon would be claimants to that title streaming in from all over Canada. And our socialists really were socialists ready to nationalize those holdings, without indemnification at all. They had a lot of spunk and the arguments to back up their demands that have soon been totally lost in the last half century. God, their current leader is even going around claiming that their new party is really a Liberal movement. He would not only never become the leader but he would have been drummed out of the party in any and every capacity as an archetypical traitor to the movement.

Of course our strait laced and very provincial capital in Victoria, what a derivative and meaningless name, always looked down its nose at us, even though they were soon smaller and more deadly dull than I was. Although they had a small Chinatown and loggers district too, but hell.

I remember the city fathers decided to put money into extending Powell Street all the way out to what became Hastings Park, then mainly a patch of second growth brush land, far east past the eastern outskirts of town. Well the city council extended the city boundary out past Nanaimo out to Boundary Road for that. We had various offers to install street car routes from private companies but the BC Electric offered to supply electric street cars on rails in what many investors thought was a risky venture and wound up running them profitably for fifty years plus supplying all

the private and public homes with electricity. It was one of the earliest and most important businesses in B.C.

You know there are still some wooden houses and some brick ones too from my teenage years that are still standing. I wouldn't have believed that they would be around so long, although I don't think they will be for much longer. Kids who grew up in some neighborhood have memories of such places, during summer and winter conditions that were different from those today. People who are very old or dead today and yet there are still those occasionally rebuilt or refurbished. Who would have believed it then?

You know, most cities take on some of the characteristics of those who live in them. That's why certain cities immediately appeal to certain people who came to accept them as they are. Maybe it's the sea, maybe it's the mountains you can see from the streets in places. For sure it's the people already there, maybe it's the climate. Well yes we've got too much rain and gloomy weather. But that's not my fault. I didn't ever want that, not really. Even if it makes the trees grow.

On another matter I always knew I would become a great city, always, even when I was just another small sawmill town. And many of my people felt it, too. Yes, they did. I never felt I'd decline or stagger along as a seaside Lethbridge or a southern Prince Rupert or a British Columbian Ottawa. Thank God.

A contemporary historian published a book called *The West of the West*. She's from the American middle west strangely enough. That is what I always thought myself. Canada starts east of the Rockies so I always felt somewhat unique, a western Canadian.

What did I feel about some of the other settlements in BC? Well it changed and it depended on who they were. Now I feel quite superior to all of them, which is actually the true case. Of course a lot of their residents feel that way about their hometowns and have a special affection toward them, like Kamloops. I can understand that, that's normal. But there are also places which I and my people felt a certain hostility toward, too, like New Westminster. It was settled a very little earlier than I was and built up an inner core in the late 19th century faster than I did--which they were always boasting about. But I always felt it was just a hick town which became overly bumptious among a few boosters. By 1910 I was head and shoulders above all these small burgs that no one took seriously. Yah, hey hey, excuse me if I chortle.

My first fifteen, twenty years were good ones. Things went well for us. We've managed to elect and sustain provincial governments that were in our corner. The unions have been kept in check; apart from the skilled trades it was as if they didn't exist--although attempts to press them forward were constantly going on. The economy was rolling along fine, despite the troubles we've have in the United States. Somebody always needs some lumber although there's that constant threat of America establishing nationalist trade limits on what they'll import to sustain their

own lumber industry. We can still produce it a lot cheaper than they can and price will win out in the long run whatever the local interests are. Vancouver has become a world class city today. It wasn't that way then we started out. We can sell and ship lumber to even China at a profit. That's what counts. They're not much different than when they were under Chiang Kai Shek today. We had some of our senior executives over there a few years ago and they didn't have any difficulty at all in determining sales opportunities.

Vancouver is so much more cosmopolitan now than when I was starting out. So many more Chinese and Japanese businessmen around now. People complain that they're squeezing Canadian entrepreneurs out. But we don't accept racist remarks like that, even if they're not illegal yet. East Asia is where the next boom is going to come from and we're uniquely established to take advantage of that. Our children may have to learn Chinese or Japanese in the future rather than any of those languages of tired old Europe that they are still teaching in school today. My God I heard a little while ago of a school where they are still teaching Latin, if you can believe it, And our children will learn those Asian languages, too, if they want senior jobs in major resource industries.

Africa, India, Israel, the Middle East, Eastern or even Western Europe rarely come up in our business discussions today. And why should they? We're thinking that possibly that most of the primary resources of Canada may be turned over to Native Aboriginal owners in the future. I would have said that was impossible but with current developments even that

seems possible today. But hell, we can buy back the city just as easily from them as we could from anybody else, so what's to worry about. Some of the forward looking thinkers in the business community have looked into that and they seem quite enthused about the opportunities which could open up - operating with fewer limitations than the provincial authorities imposed. So we're all gung ho about indigenous rights to forest resources.

Oh, right. Vancouver. Well most of the working people here are just going to have to move out into the Valley if they want to stick around here. If they don't like the prices they can always move to somewhere in northern Saskatchewan. Owning your own home is not a right, although two or three generations of people acted as if it were. No company can afford to pay wages that would allow simple workers to buy or even rent a house in town today So what's wrong with living in a suburb of Abbotsford or Whaley. With a good SkyTrain service they'd spend less than three hours a day going to their jobs. You think Vancouverites won't do that? We'll see.

A Walk Along the Industrial Shoreline

I used to love walking along the shoreline in Vancouver. It was so full of life and interesting structures. It was seemingly solid. You never had the feeling of here today and gone tomorrow. Starting out in the east end of the city was Second Narrows bridge low over the inlet, somehow pulling together the two shores, girders bunched together somehow all scraggly looking with a spidery iron superstructure. The center section lifted up to allow ships to pass beneath it. A black and rusty trellis, built in the 1920s. As kids we'd walk over it to the North Shore to ramble around Seymour Creek a couple of times a month. The approach from the Vancouver side was a very narrow twisting roadway. At the bridge entrance you rode over a plank roadway that clattered a lot when a truck or a car rolled over it. You'd hear the pop of the planks. It was usually with a sense of completion that we'd head off the bridge to the southern shore. I always wanted to take a ride up on the center section when it rose to let a ship pass but I never did, never had the nerve to actually do it. Neither did any of the kids we knew

We might pause briefly in the center span, look over the side to watch the fast moving currents tear by and the whirlpools as they formed and unformed underneath. Occasionally you might see some seals underneath swimming by rather unconcernedly. We might head down to the rail tracks by the Alberta Pool grain elevator just off the bridge, one of the biggest in Vancouver. There you'd find rail cars loaded with wheat from the Prairies parked, or half emptied along the spur lines there. Some

people who kept chickens or pigeons in their back yards might be down there sweeping out the already emptied box cars, filling up a bag or two of grain, but it wasn't usually advisable because the place was recurrently visited by the CPR police.

They had their own police force, of course. There were a lot of police forces around Vancouver then. Then we'd amble west along the tracks just south of Windermere Pool. In separate outings in the summer time we might swim there. A corralled patch of the sea, beside a big grassy area. Just west of Windermere Pool was a sawmill with a big beehive slab burner burning up the waste. It was like a mini volcano at night throwing up sparks when we went down to look at it. Not much appreciated by the owners of wooden houses in the vicinity. Then further west along the tracks where there was usually numbers of boxcars loading shingles and dressed lumber parked. Then a covey of eighteen or so boat houses, as we called them. None of them were really boats but were fastened to the end of the rail embankment and they hung out over the water on beams and pillar stilts.

Quite a few of the kids I knew at school lived down here. There was one guy whose name was Jack who was always in trouble at school, always fighting with somebody; Black Jack we called him. A really ferocious bully at school. We'd be pretty tired by the time we got there so we didn't have much to say with the other kids living here. A large number of girls as I remember.

There was a kind of natural bay along the shoreline after this patch of houses where you'd find the shore side of Columbia elevators. That was a very old and very little used grain solo whose storage sat up on Wall street and whose loading gantries were on a long dock running quite far off shore. In the all the years I lived there I only saw it berthing ships a half a dozen times. Next came a patch of shacks that I knew best, below our place on Wall Street, where the Wagers lived. That was fronted by a broad quite beautiful four lane cement highway leading nowhere, the purpose of which I never discovered. Broadway or 'The Great White Way' as people called it. It was regularly patrolled by police cars but we never knew why. Some of the houses in that stretch were quite substantial structures, built up on breast works of logs and rocks, with floating docks built out from them. Others were tumbled down shacks built with whatever the people could scrape together and built with what ingenuity they possessed. About a hundred yards out into the Inlet was Terminal Dock, a low warehouse stretching a long ways along the shore. It was a low and flat roofed structure filled with pallets of flour and sugar. Dock workers running tow cars would bring out these pallets and place them on to loading nets on the dock where the ship's winch could get at them, haul them up and then down over the hatches and load the ship. Wall street was high enough so you could look down and see this activity quite clearly and see the loads being lowered into the hatches. There were also rail flat cars that might be driven out onto the dock and beside the ships moored there, the winches would pile lumber loads onto the deck of the ship itself. Sometimes a ship would have a load of scrap metal and trains of gondola cars filled with scrap metal and scrap iron would be run out to

the ships. As they loaded it aboard it would make a quite horrendous racket, screeching and clanking and tumbling into the lower decks, sometimes usually late at night it seemed.

Have I mentioned the freighters? Sure why not. A lot of the ships for the bigger shipping companies were all similar. For the first years after the war they were all ten thousand ton Liberty ships. The British companies however, mainly stayed with their eight to ten thousand ton Victory ships. They mainly all carried a crew of twenty-five to thirty men. The newer ones were all powered by diesel engines, but there were still some coal-fired ones around, twin stacked usually, a grimy grey and black, with hulls flaring up sharply on the stern. Then there were also the bluish-grey of the America Mail Line vessels. They were a little bit bigger than the others and kept port natives off their ships. An arrogant lot we figured. The most attractive of the ships, however, were the Swedish and Norwegian freighters. All of them with their brown canvas hatch covers battened down when not loading or discharging cargo and with their brass and polished wood doors. At twelve to one a.m. on New Year's Day all the ships in the harbor would sound off in a chorus of blasts and toots and squawks to welcome in the New Year in a friendly manner. I always stayed up for that.

During the day you'd also see wood scows being towed behind tug boats filled with colossal heaps of sawdust, sometimes with lumber and sometimes even with prefabricated houses being sent up the coast. As well as oil tankers taking on their cargo from refineries east of the Second

Narrows bridge to be carried up the coast to hamlets and villages there. And of course the tug boats and fishing boats ranging from the beautiful old three-decker *Master*, the last steam tug on the coast to the squat shorter but more powerful Cates tugs painted white, black and gleaming butter yellow which shuttled freighters from one dock to another and towed barges and scows around the harbor. Also the Straits company tugs, usually double decked and larger dressed up in their white and red super structure and black hulls, towing in log booms from the west coast of Vancouver Island or scows and barges from along the coast. Not to forget the fishing boats, coming from I don't know where. Nobody fished in the harbor, of course. Old fashioned table seiners with their net folded on the raised deck; also new large drum net seiners with crews of six to eight men. And also whole fleets of the narrow gillnetters, looking supremely unseaworthy but which headed a long way up the coast to fish.

Vancouver Speaking No. 2

Wind is something you rarely hear discussed about Vancouver but it is definitely a part of the city. Wind, not the kind of wind you have in say Chicago or indeed in most of our own Prairie towns. But there definitely are some sea breezes you can feel throughout most of the city on a typical spring or summer day. In some districts they are very noticeable, like everywhere that connects directly with the harbor or with the Gulf of Georgia. Whether it's rainy or there's sunshine you can feel it, usually a fairly gentle, warmish breeze--well yes a cool cutting breeze in the winter. But it freshens the city, it gives it some additional liveliness. Some will say that is simply boosterism on my part but it's really a part of Vancouver.

Of course there are times when you wish there wasn't a breeze, like when some chemical plant or other or a factory is pumping out some of its foul smelling fumes into our town, but what's that amount to really? Not much, although it was sometimes fairly bad on certain days when we didn't have strict controls over air pollution. Some people complained about the odors that were being blown from some of the slaughter houses along the rail lines and the odors coming from the oil refineries and certain chemical plants. But it's something that people get used to over time. I myself rarely encountered that in the West End or in Point Grey where I later lived. Besides as some industry wits had it 'It's really the smell of money, the smells associated with people working and earning an income'. That doesn't wash anymore but some dolts keep repeating it like a mantra.

On a calm fall day stoves and furnaces burning wood and coal fuel send up streams and clouds of almost white streams of smoke from dry wood to clouds of brownish yellow clouds from furnaces burning McLeod soft No. 3 coal. It slowly glides down off the roofs and collects and eddies along the street building up in pools at low spots. This is also where thickening patches of fog and water vapor collect. They mingle and smog is born. It could be a demon for those charged with shepherding trucks and cars through the city. How they cursed foggy/smoggy Vancouver. Fog has its own shifting densities and colors, anywhere from a translucent white through which you could make out the shapes and sometimes even veiled faces. Or it could be so thick and cloud-like that it would make the streetcars crawl along at one tenth of their normal speed. You sometimes just couldn't see five feet ahead of you. That's what most people remember about a real fog here.

But at times it could also be extraordinarily beautiful. I remember once looking down on east Hastings Street on a moderately foggy mid week morning and watching streetcars edge their way into banks of fog and the fog creeping up the hills in great whitish clouds with blocks of houses dissolving and reappearing from it. Of course those having to go to work through it weren't as appreciative of it. But it's all gone now, our controls over air pollution eliminated smog and a lot of the fog throughout all my districts.

Smoke too. A lot of people from up country began calling Vancouver Smokey Town, like it was something to be ashamed of. Christ, smoke was

a part of what made Vancouver beautiful. It really did. I recently read a reminiscence of a young teenager growing up along the waterfront in the 1940s and his description of the various kinds of smoke that then prevailed in the city was very moving and beautiful. It's good to be reminded that there are at least some others who have similar feelings about the urban environment as you do, although you might not be wise to admit it today

The fog is something else it takes a real, native-born Vancouverite to fully appreciate. We really don't have it any more, which may be just as well. Fog requires clouds of air borne particulates as well as lots of water vapor. We had plenty of both then, especially in the fall and in winter when people stoked up their coal and wood burning furnaces.

"On a calm fall day the water vapor would cling to those particulates and give you an ever changing sea of fog with different densities and colors and textures. Although it was never appreciated by those who had to drive to work through it. But it could be beautiful. It was something I was always happy to see as long as it lasted. Though again it wasn't a sentiment shared by many."

Rain, well what can you say about it. Most of my residents simply hated rain in all its forms, regardless of whether it made the grass green or kept our trees fresh. People did usually come to accept it though. Apart from the endless rain and overcast skies and what seems to go on month upon month, solid dark rain clouds intermixed with rain and drizzle and heavy down pours. Well, it's all part of my constitution so I should at least be

used to it but I've got to say that I'm not and don't believe I ever will like it Rain--if only we could export it to somewhere that needs it. Sell it by the tanker-load or by the month, especially around January and February. No, I'm still not acclimatized to it. And I've heard that many native people who've lived here for millennia before me who also get deeply depressed during our rainy seasons.

Of course there is also the rain we get during hot summer spells--when even drizzle isn't too bad then. It can be very refreshing but we don't have enough hot days that require much refreshing. Look at the mobs of kids that crowd the beaches when it is hot and sunny in Vancouver. 'Give us more' they seem to cry. Let it rain in Osoyoos if it has to fall anywhere. Vancouver truly is the capital of the rain coast. Ugh.

You've got to remember that I am the spirit of Vancouver speaking to you. I don't have to follow the current practices or fashions of correctness. I'm not like a mayor that has to get himself elected and appeal to the sentiments of those who vote. While my own sentiments have changed some over time due to sundry forces I also embody all those who have lived in me for almost a hundred and forty years now. So that is something of a maturing process. I'm usually referred to as a modern, progressive, forward looking city. But those who run my day to day affairs have often been cliques of real estate salesmen and corporate city developers. Which I've found often amounts to the same thing. It's true that right from the start we had sometime extremely active individuals and issue-oriented groups which have served the citizens of this city well,

more so than was generally recognized. All the battling and campaigning it took to get our neighborhood parks established, having to beat back the efforts of the real estate interests who of course wanted every block of land for office building sites or for private housing. There should be a memorial to those members of the city who battled to hold them in check at least at certain times. But even I don't remember all their names any more.

The Sylvia Hotel, the hospitals around the city, the Vancouver and Georgia Hotels, the high rise office and apartment towers in downtown Vancouver. When I listen to myself I sometimes don't even recognize myself anymore. For about twenty years after it was completed in 1911 I used to eat on the top floor of the Sylvia Hotel. "Dine in the sky" was their broadly known claim. I first thought it would be some kind of a roof garden on top of the place and was disappointed that it was merely a fancy restaurant inside the walls of the building. It had a lot of large windows and you could look out over almost all of Vancouver, the more attractive parts of it anyway. Of course as a spirit I don't really partake of food literally. People don't really see or hear me but they sometimes feel my presence and detect my nature, although most of the time I think it's their imagination. I'm the spirit of all the people who live in me and have come to me. So naturally I'm variable; to an extent I differ as their views change, as they age and mature and also as the understandings of the times differ. But there is continuity to myself, as a city, as a place which has a reputation, the reputation of having a certain character. Do you understand? I hope that's not too mystical. I may sound like a person with

a certain personality but really I'm not. I don't usually have any control over what is done in my name, although sometimes I feel very strongly about certain actions. I don't even have much control over what is built in my districts, although I sometimes have definite sentiments about what is. Like I dislike much of the building and developments which have gone on in the last forty years. They've turned me almost into a mini New York and I don't like it.

Burrard Inlet

Water is water. It's liquid and it flows along. What can you say about that? Quite a bit actually. The water of Burrard Inlet was always different, depending upon the wind and the light and the time of day. It was definitely alive. Living water correct? On a real windy day you've got a line of white caps surging across it, moving rhythmically, the caps falling over on each other at times and the water a gun metal gray over the surface. Seawater is a bit bluish, a greenish blue that can be almost translucent, yet blackish if you look down into it,

Some people sat on the sterns of their small boats but not me. You can get wet from a small wave that way and I like to get out a boat dry. I never saw red water in BC although on certain summer days you can occasionally see muddy khaki yellow water coming from the Fraser at the entrance to the inlet. It's seawater but it's muddy.

Deep-sea water is blue they say, maybe, but I've never seen it as blue myself. Sometimes the harbor water is almost blackish purple, iridescent with patches of oil on it. There might be a strip of tidal backwash across the inlet made up of sawdust, chunks of wood and the ends of small logs; at least it used to be. We might paddle out to that and load the canoe full of wood chunks and even small logs if we could get them aboard. Then we'd take it home and load it on to a stage just above the water and try and haul the logs up where they could be sawn up.

We'd drag everything we'd collected up into the woodshed to dry out for some months. Then we'd go inside the house and see if we could find any comic books we hadn't read and if we found some we'd sit around the outer walkway of the shack with our backs against the tar papered wall, reading comic books for as long as they lasted.

The harbor was just filled with ships and boats, large and small, rusty and grimy old ones or quite new; brand new some of them, some of them still being finished up here after having been thrown together in the so called 'ship a day' yards turning them out in the Kaiser plants in America.

There were freighters from the four corners of the world, each flying their nation's maritime flag. I used to know most of them once. There'd be deep sea freighters, steel hulled mainly, but also wooden hulled mine sweepers and naval patrol ships that would make the crossing from Canada to Europe and back. There were still small coastal freighters of two to four thousand tons, usually in a state of plain decrepitude but still shifting cargo back and forth between Central and South America and here.

There'd also been whole herds of tug boats large and small, towing booms of logs to sawmills around the harbor or pushing and towing scows and barges loaded with just about anything around, over to Vancouver Island or up the coast. You'd see them almost everywhere you looked in Vancouver harbor. Where the hell did they all come from, where did they disappear to so quickly?

Vancouver Speaking 1890s to 1910

I came out here in 1888 from England, got here in 1890. So we were a major city for Europeans to settle here although for the first few years Victoria and even New Westminster were more populous than we were. I wanted to get as far away from Britain as I could and yet stay in a nation where people spoke English. I suppose I could have emigrated to Australia that was the other option there was. I considered that at first but I don't like kangaroos. When I first landed in Montreal I got a job in a rope factory and I just barely got by. About two years later I came out here on the CPR which was just newly built then. When I got here I wasn't surprised at all that they clamored about Great Britain as the motherland and took its side during the First World War. I myself didn't opt out as a conscientious objector but I would have had I been drafted. There was a lot of opposition to entering that war out here. Here in BC there was a strong socialist movement with the two Winches and Angus McGinnis and all the others. Of course there was a strong pro-war movement, too, backed by the sorts of people you'd expect it from like school teachers and business men and ministers of the faith. But fishermen and miners and lumber workers were mainly all opposed to enter the war, despite the childish propaganda that was being dished by the local newspapers.

1916 is the year I remember best when I was almost forty years old. We had the IWW and the Socialist Party of Canada and various social democratic parties which were all in play then. On the other side you had people like Gerry McGeer acting like a trained monkey and a true

conservative, of course. And the federal government, too. But we hardly considered the federal government of Canada as our own government. It was like an alien force.

I don't now know what I expected of Vancouver. It was the terminus of the CPR on the Pacific which was its major rationale. It wasn't Britain but and it wasn't a part of America which was important to me.

My first job here was not at Ewans cannery but in a little grocery shop on Hastings just east of Main Street, which really was the central drag in the city, just on the edge of Chinatown. To my surprise I found that Vancouver already was a small city and North Van was booming with a lot of sawmills operating there. The downtown core was already pretty well built up and was bustling with a lot of activity and there were real estate salesmen everywhere, more than seemed possible. Private houses especially were stretched out from Kitsilano Beach all the way east to Commercial Drive. Fairly spotty in some places. There was a lot of bush land between houses in some areas, but was well built up in other places.

There were a lot of single men living as roomers in private houses and rooming houses. All this development was taking place throughout the province, everywhere from New Westminster to Castlegar and from Prince George down to the Boundary region. A boom and bust province is what others called us but for a long while it was really boom times so far as I remember. Lumber mills were going up everywhere and building

supply houses, too. As well, bustling cafes were opening up all over the place and beer parlors, too.

At that time and somewhat later a strong pro-prohibitionist sentiment sprang up among families but beer parlors were really like our social clubs. Most of us had a few favorite beer parlors we went to and although they were all pretty much the same you'd know who you'd meet in each one of them. When the provincial government moved to close them down in the early 1920s, it was pretty rotten to us who patronized them. We just hated prohibitionists, imposing their silly stupid moralizing on us. I was still single then, a solid working man and a member of the Socialist Party of Canada, and I felt betrayed and sold down the river. It was a clear example of a petty bourgeoisie moralist telling us how we were supposed to live. It was almost like I was back in Britain. Maybe worse. Oh, there were some socialist prohibitionists as well but we just didn't consider them.

We had a pretty wide spread general strike here in Vancouver in 1920 or so, just at the end of the war. People don't believe that happened but it did. It seems to me it started as a regular strike at the Alberta lumber mill on False Creek. It was all about them hiring Japanese Canadian workers. It went on for months. But the real general strike was planned and organized by the Vancouver Labor Council and it had support from labor councils from all around. For a week or so they closed down most of the city. There wasn't even any milk or newspapers delivered. Our supporters just came out from everywhere. From lumber mills, shingle mills, from all

of the docks, even from many of the factories, such as they were then in Vancouver, -- all stopped. Even many of the cafes closed down. The strike was pictured by the newspapers and the straw bosses as a subversive act, that it hampered Canada's war effort, but the war was almost over anyway. It wasn't long before the patriotic types launched their own mobilization and launched patriotic parades by people dressed in soldiers' uniforms and waving the union jack. Gerry McGeer patriots they were. But they had murder in their eyes, some of them. But they couldn't jail us all. But all the leaders of the IWW and the Socialist Party of Canada and the major union leaders were arraigned on various charges. Democracy in action.

Vancouver, Transportation Hub of the Province

Vancouver, tucked away in the southwest corner of the province, is the rather unusual locale to locate the hub of transport chains. But that is what it was. Starting downtown at Main and Alexander you'll find a truly huge high pier of the CNS (Canadian National Steamships of the CNR) which had a fleet of really big passenger liners, some as big as those plying the Atlantic, which serviced the Queen Charlotte Islands, Prince Rupert, and some of the other larger settlements on the coast. They'd been in the process of going broke for more than twenty years and finally did so in the late 1940s.

Just a hop, skip, and jump to the west lie the Union Steamship docks, 'God's gift to the BC coast', as some wit had it. They had a phenomenal fleet of ships of all sizes and derivations, some clapped-out clunkers, some large wooden hulled ones from the Victoria shipyards and others from the slipways of the Clyde. They seemed to go everywhere they could possibly make any money delivering cargo or passengers on the central and southern coast and even Vancouver Island. Old fashioned stubby beauties some of them. A high, raised wooden walkway climbed up over the rail tracks and connected the dock with the loggers' district at Powell and Water streets. The Union boats were the loggers' ships *par excellence* and one even entered into the folk songs of BC.

A bit further west at the foot of Powell and Cordova is a high, raised roadway leading to the CPR docks. Their ships were the Princesses of the

coastal fleet. Black hulls, gold and white super structure, and red and white funnels. As elegantly appointed inside as you could reasonably expect. Passengers came by cab or walked down to catch these ships with their sea bags or suitcases tucked under their arms. The CPR concentrated mainly on the Prince Rupert run and the run over to the Queen Charlotte Islands plus over to Victoria and the major cities of Vancouver Island. Tied in with the CPR dock was the main Pacific terminal for the CP rail line, carrying people from the prairies and the interior over to the coast. It was a red brick building, luxuriously appointed with many mural paintings in the interior and was usually busy with the comings and goings of the trains pulling in and out on the rails down below the station.

Yet further to the west were the docks of the Gulf Lines, a recently established fly-by-night company which served communities around the Gulf of Georgia and up into Bute Inlet. They'd put in anywhere under any conditions if they felt they could make a buck at it. Small reconvered world war two patrol boats with licenses to carry 140 passengers but whose single rear compartment was very crowded with 40. They were in the process of going broke despite the miserable wages that they paid.

Beside the Gulf Lines there was also another converted patrol boat called the Jervis Inlet Express. She ran into logging camps on Jervis Inlet but wasn't a factor in the coastal traffic.

Four or five blocks going south on Main Street from the CNR docks you came to a quite attractive formal urban park bounded on one side by the CNR rail station.

Near the CNR station was the Great Northern Railway depot that went down to Seattle and the rest of the States.

On Hastings and Carrall a block east of Woodward's stood the BC Electric tram station, an outfit operating huge oversized street car-like trams through the Fraser Valley out to Sardis and Chilliwack and sometimes hauling in in farmers' milk cans to certain creameries along the rail line. Its rail station-like waiting room was sometimes packed with farmers coming in to Vancouver to arrange for some purchase or sale or to take in the bright city lights. It was near the Rex and the Beacon cinemas so we kids would pass by often on weekend outings. The CNS station had been rather luxurious once upon a time with mosaic tile pictures on the walls and with a truly huge well-polished hardwood floor with columns. But it wasn't used much by the mid 1940s.

And last but not least the Pacific Stage Lines up on Seymour and Dundas streets with its buses embossed with Pegasus--the flying horse, a locally owned and operated bus line that seemed to go everywhere in BC, at fairly cheap prices, everywhere that had a road in and out of, That place was always busy, with men returning home from somewhere or with mothers loaded down with shopping bags, but not with many kids for some reason.

Unconnected to this transport hub, but of soon to be of predominant importance were the airline depots out on Sea island, still a long ways out from the city then. There were a growing number of charter airlines like Central BC Air, flying into places in the northern interior, with its crest of a trumpeter swan that always appealed to me. They actually still flew a single engine Junkers plane from the early 1920s into Kit mat delivering cargo but not passengers. I think they flew that plane directly from, its last run to the Aviation Museum in Ottawa, because I saw it in one of their displays there a decade later. It gave me a strange feeling. There was also Pacific Western Airlines which flew to almost anywhere in BC it seemed. They were float plane operations with float mounted Beavers and Otters with a capacity of six to eight passengers. But the granddaddy of them all was Queen Charlotte Airlines, which had actually started in the Queen Charlottes and ran a number of converted, large Canso seaplanes up and down the coast and into Kitimat during it's construction and then off into history.

A Filipino Dugout Canoe

We had a cedar dugout canoe, the Wager kids and I. About twenty feet long and about three feet deep and three feet wide. We got it from a Filipino freighter that was tied up at Terminal dock. They found it floating empty off the Philippines somewhere and were trying to sell it in Vancouver but couldn't round up any buyers so they just gave it to us kids. It was early summer and we'd been hanging around their ship for a while as it was loading lumber.

The canoe was adzed down to a very smooth surface and an even thickness of an inch or two, with solid thwarts across her at four places. A very solid boat, yet still very easy to paddle with a couple of pieces of lumber or the sawed off ends of oars that we finally acquired.

She was very seaworthy too, and could take some fairly big harbor waves quite nicely and cut through and over waves when we were traveling. I always thought that she was carved from a single cedar log, but I don't think there are any cedar trees in the Philippines. Are there? I wanted to paint two eyes on her bow but somehow never got around to it. But she got around quite nicely blind

She was surprisingly light and easy to turn for such a large canoe. Too heavy to haul overland though. She'd clearly been built by a master canoe carver.

You could put five or six kids and our family German Shepherd Peggy in her with various boxes of goods and belongings in her and still paddle her with some ends of lumber. We paddled her everywhere in Vancouver harbor and I never had the feeling she would capsize whatever we did with her.

She didn't have a raised bow or stern but she rode over and through any waves with the greatest of ease. I always trusted her. A real beauty.

We once paddled her from the old Second Narrows bridge almost to the Lion's Gate bridge and back again on a longer trip, although it became a bit too much on the way back. It was something that was definitely taboo for my mother so I never mentioned it to her. But it was a fairly heavy canoe, far too heavy for us to ever attempt to pull it out of the water and over land anywhere.

She did play a part in my fantasies of running away from home as a kid. I fantasied about taking the canned food I had stashed away in our basement, taking the canoe and paddling it up to the head of Indian Arm and part way up the river that runs into the sea there, and camping out for a while. I never did do it though.

The Wagers largely took the canoe over after a while since it was moored at their dock. I felt somewhat cheated by that but I didn't complain. They'd paddle over to Terminal Dock at least once a day to get two pails full of fresh drinking water from a tap on the inside corner of the dock.

There was no water service for those houses along the water front and people had to get their water either from the dock or from the water that trickled down a steep slope below Wall Street. They had to make at least two trips with five gallon containers a day; not an excessive amount for a family with four children and one adult. It was a chore but not an onerous one. We'd paddle over to the dock and tie up on the logs there, and then climb up five or six rungs on an iron ladder that hung down to the logs. You'd position the pail right below the water tap, hang onto the ladder, turn on the tap with one hand and try not to be sprayed by the water. When the pail was full you'd turn the tap off somehow and take the pail down to the canoe. Then do the same for the next pail. I must have done that hundreds of time while helping the Wagers get water. It was especially tricky in the winter time with the ice and snow. I must have been around twelve or thirteen at the time. When no real dangers usually worry you.

We also picked up a good portion of the stove wood they used to heat the shack. There were chunks of wood and the butt ends of logs floating everywhere in the harbor then. Every week or so we'd paddle along the docks and waterfront to pick up the wood. Sometimes we could put fairly large chunks into the canoe, yet other pieces had to be towed along behind it. You usually had to wait for the right tide to do it. A half day spent patrolling around the harbor would get you a large pile of wood. You'd have to get it over to the stage beside the house and then somehow get it up onto the dock, an undertaking that defeated us sometimes. Then we'd get the two-man saw out and cut the logs up into splittable chunks of

wood. They would go into the wood shed to dry out for half a year first. Anything that would burn was acceptable; we weren't picky.

But the canoe was lovely; balanced just right so you could turn it with just a couple of strokes with the paddle. She would just glide through the water. There must have been a lot of skill involved in fashioning dugouts like that. For some reason we never worried much about teredo worms that can turn logs and boats into a Swiss cheese in no time. There wasn't much we could have reasonably done to prevent that.

Thank you again you seamen of the Philippines for that boat which played a big role in our lives.

The Harbor Sea

Seawater looks about the same everywhere at all times of the day, right?

No, it doesn't.

At times it's a stony, slate colored gray with no life to it at all, but at other times it's a kaki almost yellow brown on a hot sunny summer day. At other times it's a deep blue reflecting mirror to the sky. And on yet other days it's marked by a broad, diagonal drift line comprised of thick wood sawdust and of sticks and even a few small logs drifting in on a harbor tide. The tidal charts given in the newspapers are only a very approximate indication of the movement on any given day.

The tide pulls the water in at various speeds, quickly in constricted channels, riding forward after a short delay. It moseys in evenly over sandy beaches and broad estuaries, making advances or retreats over promontories and slowly sloshing up over mud and sand beaches.

If it's raining the surface of the water is stippled with falling rain drops. If it's raining heavily they almost appear as to bounce out of the surface, creating little splashes. And then there can be waves forming all over Vancouver harbor, running along in lines, their crests turning over into a whitish foam. Only occasionally would you find really big waves. They require more sea room to build up, but you'd find them curving out from the bow sprit of ferries along the routes to Vancouver Island.

Seawater is pretty clear in Vancouver harbor but it can get pretty muddy on the approaches to the Fraser River estuary. The tidal flows create all sorts of distinct current in a body of water, which are quite unpredictable. There may be a diagonal stripe of detritus and chunks of wood and even small logs which form or there maybe patches of iridescent oil. In some corners of the Inlet where you might even find a circular patch of seaweed. It can be quite dirty or clean depending on the day. Some days you'd even find seals and once I even saw elephant seals lurking. In some places where you'd find forests of kelp, their big brown leaves suspended thirty or forty feet above the bottom by floating bulbs of kelp. There's fish, too, of all sorts--rock cod, flounders, black cod and shiners and the immature sea perch (shiners) but no salmon. For them you have to go down to the mouth of the Fraser River. Kids used to patiently angle for fish from the small docks and wharves and off log booms. We'd also paddle over to the log booms off the mouth of Lynne Creek and try our luck at getting crabs.

And there are the birds, too. Seagulls appear to be everywhere. They screech and caw and call and wheel in circles, flying and diving singly or in formation. White and partly black patches with huge yellowy-orange beaks which rarely miss any food they come upon. They'll follow boats going over to the Island or up the coast for a long ways to get any scraps and left over food dumped from the galleys. And then there are the pigeons, lots of them. Milling and cooing and talking, especially around the grain terminals. There are even some geese which nested in small coveys along the sea shore in out of the way spots. There are also slews of

sea ducks -- Mallards, grebes, pintails, canvasbacks and god knows what other species. And the blue herons, too. Sitting on top of old exposed pilings and emitting occasional screechy-squawks. They'll fly away as soon as you even approach them. They're all pretty much near the docks. I'm just surprised that there were no falcons and hawks around to hunt them.

There are also patches of floating seaweed, pop weed we used to call it, with the crinkly leaves of seaweed interspersed with small bulbous pockets which kept it afloat. Drifting in loose and open mats almost anywhere in the harbor.

Vancouver Speaking No. 3: From World War One to the 1940s

My parents came to Vancouver in the last century, but I was born here, in 1905. They sort of saw the place as a new frontier town but I never did. Because it never was in my time. It was just tough in a few areas but really not so much. We lived in the West End, not too far from English Bay. It was just a very fast growing Canadian city.

It's true that we all felt a sense of ownership over the place from the most prominent building in town from the Bay and over some of the high rise buildings. Yeah, a sort of proprietary feeling, strangely enough. In some places the 'No Trespassing' signs seemed reasonable and acceptable but in other places we felt that it wasn't. Deeply offensive in fact. You know what I mean.

About 1910 to 1913 I think we had a hot time for building. God everything was in motion. Houses were going up everywhere. The suburbs were growing like mad. The streetcar lines pushed out in all directions, out along Powel Street, and to Stanley Park, in all directions actually. And yet the place was still small enough that you could keep it all in hand; not literally, of course, because Vancouver always was a city. The biggest city west of Winnipeg we always said, like that was some prize.

Cities don't die, unless they are destroyed by man. And they don't have a personality either unless it's the collective personalities of those living in

them, which changes over time. It's part of a province and a part of a nation. What does it mean to be a Canadian city?

There were already a lot of different personalities living in my city when I was a kid, often conflicting ones, so how can you say a city has a personality. Well, you've been in various cities, haven't you? Some you feel comfortable in and others you don't. Some expand your feelings and understandings and others don't. Some cities will inspire you to do certain things, to take up sailing or to go mountain climbing and others won't. That's the spirit of a city. I didn't wholly approve of the way I was turning out. But generally I was proud of my people. Anyway, we're talking about Vancouver, no?

The twenties were pretty bad. I first thought there'd be a real explosion in the city. Almost everyone earned the most miserable wages although there was a lot of trade flowing through my docks and rail yards. Lumber was dirt cheap. One could build a small house for about 300 or 400 dollars worth of lumber. Incredible, eh? Not a shack either but a real house. The logging and sawmilling industry all around the province was growing by leaps and bounds. And still it was difficult to get a decent paying job anywhere. A lot of kids got started in logging as whistle punks, you know dragging the cable around to different locales in a logging show and transmit the signals from a logger's team to order the steam donkey to start hauling in the cable to move a log. The pay generally was terrible and the living conditions, too, in many camps. Many men became convinced that it was a situation inherent in the capitalist system. You

know there were supporters of the I.W.W. still around believe it or not. It may not have had much in the way of organization left but a lot of its ideas were widely held by local working people especially camp workers then. We also had a growing red menace as some called it, too. The loggers would come in from their up-coast camps, came flowing off the Union Steamships and spread over the whole downtown district, especially along Cordova, into the flop house hotels that sprang up around there. And into the beer parlors.

The thirty's--what a god awful, terrible time that was. We had a mayor who was a madman, Gerry McGeer. He was truly hated personally by a great many people. I'm sort of surprised that no one tried to assassinate him, but no one did. We had hunger in a lot of our homes, plain and simple. A lot of people who were just hanging on by the skin of their teeth but became ultra conservatives, complaining about lollygagging foreigners who came into the country and took jobs away from real Canadians. That's what put McGeer in the mayor's seat. He didn't have a worthwhile idea about anything; he'd just boosted the business class up in every public comment he made. Blind as a bat to what was really going on all around him. No wonder the reds grew so much during the thirties. No relief for anyone. No money except for those who could afford higher land and houses taxes then anyway.

No money for anything. God what a time. I've often wondered how it was that so many labor unions were established during those times. I suppose that men were desperate about their jobs and livelihood and were ready

to try anything they thought might give them some power to confront their bosses. Of course the employers would *always* reply that unions kill a business, no matter what. It was their constant refrain and people listened to it less and less. It's true a lot of fly by night businesses did shut down but they probably would have anyway, depression or not, unions or not. We had hungry crowds on the streets almost constantly and the town was just packed with the single unemployed--young men mainly. And the depression just went on and on. The depression went right on through the thirties and only ended with the preparations for the upcoming war. Of course the reds claimed that the only solution that capitalism could find for depression was a good war. Nobody seriously listened to them until the preparations for the next war started up.

Some people say I've got an overly aggressive personality and that I'm not truly the spirit of a truly Canadian city. So who says that--Ontarians or who? I've got immigrants from every part of Canada who move here every year. Why do you think I've grown so fast? They seem to like the mix of people we have here and the climate, too, although I myself could do without all the rain we have. But what the hell. If people don't like it they can leave. No one's really stopping them, is there? Landowners and real estate salesmen wouldn't like it if additional people stopped coming here. Demand has pushed the price of a new house here up to one and a half million bucks. Who would have believed it ten years ago? No one. Of course there are always some who complain whatever the case is. Homes are now out of the reach of most young people. Would they rather see a

situation like we used to have where people lived in rental quarters because it was cheaper than buying?

We've now got the grandson of Norman Bethune as mayor of Vancouver. Bethune was the Canadian doctor who served with the Communist forces in China -- a *bête noir* in his time. And we also have a few reds as counselors on my council. They've been scratching around the last few years to drum up popular support for whatever they're part of now. Nobody cares for past affiliations anymore. It's rather what you stand for today that's important. That makes sense, that's fine with me.

One thing we had, right from the beginning was a substantial investor class--people with a lot of money to invest in various enterprises. We had stock brokers and investors ...down there around the Marine Building and the Credit Foncier building was the heart of a whole raft of gold bug capitalists and also behind the logging industry and what not. They'd all be over at the Terminal Club and allied clubs, drinking their lunch in between wheeling and dealing, but they were central in the cash that flowed out to all those small mines and lumber camps scattered throughout B.C. They often claimed that they were "shirt sleeved capitalists" as they were called. They hung on right through the depression era--sometimes I wondered how they did it.

Of course a hell of a lot of those small companies failed during those years. But there were always new ones to take their place. A lot of people who came in and started up during the 1920s lost everything in the

1930s, of course. But they mostly survived somehow. None of them jumped out of top floor windows or shot themselves -- which was a common misconception during tough times. And they went on to pile up a lot of wealth during the war years.

What a turn around. In 1939 people were still singing the blues but by 1940 it was "the sky's the limit." That was the feeling one got. Of course some people's sons got killed or wounded in the Second World War. But not as many as you might think. I once heard someone's account who claimed that the per capita casualties in logging were considerably higher than the losses on the war front. Maybe he was exaggerating but I don't think by much.

You used to see some phenomenal casualties in logging accidents--men hobbling along down on Cordova, out of sight of the respectable elements. You'd see them there, young men who had aged awfully quickly if they were crippled at work. It really was something I wasn't proud of visitors to our city seeing.

**Principal's School Report
School report to the Vancouver School Board by Principal of
Hastings School, R.J. McInnon, for the year 1943**

Gentlemen, this report is the twenty-first I have delivered in my capacity as Principal of Hastings School. It is tendered with due concern and full appreciation of its consequences. The massive assault on the Japanese Canadian population during this year has affected us all, here as in other parts of British Columbia.

While I can fully appreciate the dangers involved in the presence of enemy agents working within that population, I must strongly reject the odious effect on children registered in this and other schools within the province, who are mainly Canadian and cannot be regarded as enemy agents by any stretch of the imagination. Some of our own staff have proved open to the outside stresses which have been brought to bear. I openly do not respect their views on the matter.

I assure you that this matter will not be solved by supporting internment of these individuals or other un-Canadian actions against any of these individuals. It would be better to find more tolerant ways of dealing with school children. The Vancouver schools seem to be fairly thoroughly integrated into the war effort and support the British flag that flies over our citizens. The actions against Japanese Canadian students are more those of mob behavior and of mob rule, it seems to me.

In general, all the yearly goals outlined by the provincial board of education have been met during the 1942-43 year. This applies to reading skills transmitted, basic arithmetic skills learned, and knowledge of social matters appreciated, plus competence in the English language. Of our graduating grade six class some 149 out of potential graduating group of 155 have indeed graduated and will proceed to the junior high school level. This is a circa 99% percent success rate of which I am personally pleased.

The budgetary request which accompanies this report includes the salaries of two young ladies who have since joined us as teachers. Their combined salaries of \$5,900 per year are the minimum at which qualified teachers can now be hired.

We have encountered a very small juvenile delinquency rate in our students of whom not 2% have been apprehended by the authorities. I find this to be a tribute not only to our teachings in school but to the character of our student body.

Yours truly,

J.R. McKinnon, Principal, Hastings School, Vancouver, BC, 1943

About the Shipyards, the 1940s

Christ, the shipyards just sprouted up like mushrooms everywhere along the harbor during the second world war. For a few years Vancouver was one of the major ship building harbors in the world. There was Burrard's Dry Dock over on the North Shore. You'd find the North Shore ferries, looking like great squat barns loaded on top of scows, crossing back and forth from Vancouver to the North Shore filled with shipyard workers at the time of shift change, both coming and going. There must have been about 20,000 people on average working in the yards; men and a very substantial number of women doing just about everything from welding to riveting to directing the plates being lifted up and down into place on the hulls, and painting as well. I think a lot of the younger women realized they could do any task there was from that experience.

There were two bloody huge dry docks down off Powell Street at the foot of Clark. There was also a big one in False Creek, and other small fitting out docks scattered everywhere around the harbor. There were also shipyards turning out wooden hulled ships like Corvettes and mine sweepers and patrol boats. They'd drop the engines in them in Seattle and fit the ships out with navigation gear and armament and galleys and whatever else they needed up here. The shipyards began by building Victory ships, a British design with crew's quarters in a raised rear housing and officers in the mid-ships housing. But later they started building more Liberty ships, an American design which had more open cargo holds and easier to work hatches. They housed their entire crews in

the mid-ship structures. They were altogether superior, but none of them were particularly well-built ships by peace time standards and while some merchant fleets used them for a number of years after the war, they weren't around for long.

People working in those yards would scatter up to the nearest streetcar stop and wind on through Vancouver everywhere after shift changes. You'd see men and women in department stores in their paint-spattered overalls and maybe wearing a hard hat. But all that closed down almost as fast as it opened up. In a couple of years after the war there was only Burrard's on the North Shore still operating, repairing coastal vessels and seagoing ships for a few years but they didn't build any ships.

The shipyards were all 100 percent unionized from the word go. They were all "union shops". They managed to pull everything together into a single shipyard workers council after awhile, but both men and women working there didn't have any experience of unionization and it all went bust rather quickly. The owners did all right during the war. Maintaining the War Effort, it was all cost-plus, you know. 'The more cost, the more plus', as the saying went. So the management wasn't too aggrieved with unions operating there, but there were still some holdouts who couldn't see giving up their control over the work force no matter what. All of those plants went belly up very quickly. All the men and women working in them, and there were lots of them scattered around the province to find other jobs. The only one that held on was Burrard's on the North Shore.

The shipyard workers union, the fishermen and cannery workers union, the International Wood Workers of America, the Canadian Seamen's Union, the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, they were all kind of left wing-led unions and they sort of set the tone in British Columbia. But in the later 1940s their presidents and leadership were largely ousted by American-organized activists and goons, some said. That was the start of the McCarthy period. Still the entire provincial economy took off in the 1950s and there was no return to what we'd experienced during the 1930s, in the depression.

But the shipyards were really something to experience. Two or three ships going up at the same yard, the dock just swarming with men and women doing various tasks. Heavy steel plates swinging above the ship being lifted into place, sparks from acetylene torches cutting steel everywhere, the pounding of rivet guns going, welders melding together plates all over the place, operating everywhere, people hollering at each other as loud as they could and still not being heard, all of them half trained at their jobs at best. It's a wonder we didn't have many more accidents than we did have, but there were enough of them. That's the way I remember the shipyards. A hive of human activity, partly directed, although it didn't seem that way to look at it

The Store With a Deer With a Cougar on its Back in the Window

My parents were both opposed to anyone having any firearms at their disposal in general but especially for hunting, which they felt was a sport only for cruel and despicable individuals. Which was quite an unusual view to have at the time. After graduating from high school, after a couple of years doing truly demeaning 'boy's' jobs I managed to get on as a clerk at the Harkley and Haywood store in downtown Vancouver. It was on the corner of Cordova and Abbot streets, right across from the main back door to Woodward's department store on the ground floor of one of a number of decaying flop houses, which probably were respectable rooming houses when Harkley and Haywood first opened sometime after 1910 or 1912 so. It was a well established business by the time I joined them but my parents felt it was somehow demeaning for someone with a high school diploma to take a job clerking. But I liked it almost immediately. It was the leading gun store in the city and it not only sold new and used rifles but also repaired and modified them on request.

There was a quadruple tier of rifles strung all along the long Abbot side of the store with something like three hundred new and painstakingly refurbished used rifles. In front of it a glass display counter where customers had to request to see every item they were interested in. It was definitely the best gun store in town, probably in the province. Kitty corner from us was Sisson's but they were not any real competition to us.

We refurbished and repaired a lot of rifles and sold some of them, rather antique guns by current standards. Most hardware stores then sold rifles, 22's, Savage 300's, 303 rifles, which most department stores did as well. Everyone carried the Winchester 30-30 carbines which were very much in vogue then.

We had a few Krag-Joerensons rifles dumped by the US who had them in their invasion of Cuba in 1898. They were quite good rifles; long and thin but they had a tendency to jam if they weren't properly cleaned and maintained. Harkley and Haywood had all kinds of rifles, especially in its refurbished ranks. There were 217 bee or Zipper chambered ones. They fired a very fast and small shell. That was used for vermin hunting, shooting gophers and rats and squirrels. Also 25-35 caliber rifles which I'm not sure what people used for. One time I had a kid come in and ask me about cartridges for a 43 caliber Mauser. I'd never heard of that before so I told him that we didn't carry any ammunition for that. But as soon as I said it one of the older clerks there came over and said that's 11 mm Mauser and that we had lots of ammunition for that. I hadn't heard of that. It was a huge shell which carried a 385 grain lead in a flat faced bullet. That caliber was seized from the Spanish army when the US invaded Cuba in 1898.

My wife and I lived in the Kitsilano district not too far away from the beach. Almost every evening in the summer we'd go down to the beach and swim in the sea. That was part of being a Vancouverite then. I was

just a clerk at first but some years later I managed to get some night school courses on gunsmithing run by a few old gunsmiths. There were about forty of us working at Harkley and Haywood at the time. It could get pretty crowded.

It was a well known gun shop to Vancouverites. There was a story, I'm not sure how true it was, about someone from the States who'd seen a rifle in the window when the store was closed but he didn't have the address or even remember the name of the gun shop, so on the envelope he addressed it to "the store with the deer with a cougar on its back," Vancouver, B.C. That's all. But the post office figured out that it must be for us and they delivered it to Harkley and Haywood because we had a life sized stuffed model of a cougar attacking a deer in the front window. That was well known to everyone. It made me a bit proud of being employed in a place like that.

Most of our gunsmiths were trained in Britain and could be sort of closed as a group. I never did get into gunsmithing itself but at times I worked on redoing the stocks of some rifles and maybe attaching the brackets on the barrel that held the telescopic sights.

But gun sales declined drastically in the 1960s. We were a sort of specialty store so we lasted longer than some of the others who sold rifles but by the 1970s it was finished. Harkley and Heywood went broke about

ten years after I retired. And a few years after that they gutted the place and turned it into a quick-food restaurant. Ugh!

Menu of the Cassidy Cafe in Downtown Vancouver, Summer 1939

(All of these meals will fill you up and all came with four slices of bread and butter, soup of the day which was usually barley, beef, vegetable. Desert, usually a pudding, very occasionally bread puddings; plus tea or coffee.)

Hamburger steak with onions and boiled potato and vegetables; 25 cents.

Beef liver and onions with boiled potato; 20 cents.

Beef stew; 20 cents.

Wieners and baked beans; 20 cents.

Baked ham and rice with potato and vegetable; 25 cents.

Small dinner steak with toast and french fries, salad and all the rest; 45 cents.

Spring roast turkey with stuffing and potatoes and vegetable (Sunday only); 75 cents.

Roast chicken with baked potato and vegetables; 45 cents.

Corned beef and cabbage; 30 cents.

Bacon and eggs with toast; 20 cents.

Toast and jam with coffee; 15 cents.

Cup of coffee; 10 cents.

A slab of cake; 10 cents.

Bowl of soup of the day; 10 cents.

Porridge; 10 cents.

--No chow mien or chop suey

Police Record

Combined weekly police department record, Vancouver City Police Department, July 7-14, 1935

Our officers this week have once again protected public safety. We apprehended four shop lifters and two suspected of break and enter. It also included six participants in marital disputes. We apprehended one suspect in a knife attack and two participants in alleged rape cases. Plus a number of women allegedly participating in the sex trade, who claim that this is their legitimate trade.

A great deal of our time was involved in patrolling an illegal picketing at the Hobart Machine Works in the False Creek area. Our officers apprehended eighteen men who were probably foreign Reds who were agitating among the loyal employees of that factory. We also apprehended a number of former employees who were participating in this illegal action. The company was so good as to provide cool and fresh water to all those involved in this incident. It must be emphasized that this was an illegal work stoppage and that your police force confronted the parties in a most judicious manner. A few of our officers expressed hesitation to become involved in this matter. They have been removed and will be dealt with appropriately.

Only one illegal picketer was seriously injured by police batons. He was removed and taken by a patrol car to Vancouver General Hospital where he had his head stitched up. He was so ungrateful as to have the temerity

to bring a legal action against your police force for this incident. Naturally it was thrown out of court.

This summarizes the main events of the week referred to.

Assistant Supervisor J.B. McKinnon

A House *is* a Home, for Some Reminiscences of Rose 'Duluth' LaFleur, Operator of Rosie's

I always treated my girls like a fairly strict mother; I had six regulars living with me and a couple of part-timers who came in occasionally. It was a properly run place. I'd get \$5 for a visit of which the girl chosen would get \$2. The remainder went for the upkeep of the house, for food, laundry, police payment, and also for doctors' bills. I tried to see that they deposited at least half of their earnings in the bank, but they they'd soon draw it out and spend it anyway. On an average I'd say they had about forty or fifty clients a week, more in the summer than in the winter and more during holidays like July 1st and July 4th and around Christmas time.

We were a fairly well known place in town for those who were interested. People knew they'd be safe there; no pimps or fights or anything like that, although we did have a few clients who were beset on the street and robbed. Mostly they would come and go by cab.

Every few years there'd be a mayor who'd set about "to clean up Vancouver" and "rid the city of vice." What a lot of transparent pricks they were. We'd have a few police visits. But they'd usually blow over without disturbing us too much. There were a couple of native girls, both polite and well brought up. A young woman from Sweden, a quite beautiful, tall Japanese woman who kept to herself mainly, and a Chinese girl who was very outgoing and warm but she drank too heavily and I finally had to let

her go. And there was also Florence, a somewhat older woman in her thirties who I always thought was rather tough and hard, but who had her own dedicated clients who'd always ask for her.

We had a phonograph in the parlor where we met guests. I myself liked classical music but they were always playing jazz and country music which sometimes got to be too much. We'd serve liquor there, as well; that was a pretty good money-earner although we didn't have a license for that. Each of the girls had her own room which they decorated to their taste. Pretty ghastly some of it, I thought, but it was up to them. I didn't object as long as they kept the room clean. I didn't have any lessons to teach them on how to behave with the clientele; they were all pretty experienced although sometimes they were on the verge of getting drunk and I'd have to ban them from work that night. We didn't have much trouble with the clients. They paid up when they came in. The only trouble we had was if they were too drunk and showing off so we had to quiet them down that way. Most of them just wanted regular sex and only a very few had special needs they wanted met which might be sort of tricky. Some would want special dress-up games which I never encouraged but some of the girls were quite good at that.

We had a fair cross section of clients; quite a few loggers who were in Vancouver on a spree. Canadians, Americans, Swedes, a few French Canadians from Quebec, and a few from all over the place; quite a few seamen from off the freighters and occasionally some sailors, but not often. But no Chinese or Japanese; they had their own places. Some

newspaper reporters of the time would rant and rave about the vice they saw rampant. It sounded like the depths of Sodom and Gomorrah the way they would tell it; it really did. But we felt we were providing a public service that was openly and unambiguously expressed, sex.

The persistent trouble came from too many girls in the business living so close together in one house. They'd get on each other's nerves and be on the point of getting into fights at times which could be very tiring; but we got through it all. Although we weren't really a family there were a few which did come to seem like family members to me.

There was one pretty big guy who was a former boyfriend of mine who lived with us. He was sort of tough but self-restrained. He was with us for many years but he finally got knifed on the street and then he left us. I was sort of sad to see him go.

You might think that with six girls in the house the place would be pervaded with a sense of sexuality but brothels rarely are. They went to their rooms with their clients and carried out their business. Sometimes you'd hear shouts and noise coming from a room but not usually. When they were somewhat drunk or for whatever reason they'd appear with just too much exposed flesh and open clothes. I'd have to see to that. But that wasn't as often as you might think.

The girls were mainly in their twenties, but indulged in too much drink and not enough exercise, It wasn't sex itself, that would take it's toll after

a while. I ran the place for almost twenty years and I went through something like two sets of girls during that time. I'd have to drop some of them, either they weren't attracting our clients or they'd get into too many quarrels with the others. There were also two of them who managed to get pregnant in that time, with all the care we took to avoid it. That was a messy business then, having to ferret out a reliable doctor who would perform an abortion and maybe sew closed the fallopian tubes. Messy, expensive and dangerous both to those undergoing the procedure and those performing it. I'd occasionally meet some of them when I was out shopping. Neither of us would be embarrassed by our former relationship. I'd occasionally slip them a five or a ten spot if it looked like they really needed it. That's just the way it was in those days, like any other personal service job. And so it was.

My earnings weren't especially spectacular. It was about the only job available to me then that paid anything at all. There wasn't any social security or Canada Pension at that time, of course. It could get pretty rough if you were a woman and over forty or so, and without a husband.

I ran the place for over twenty years, from the 1920s to the 1940s, but it got to be too much for me so I closed the place down when I was in my sixties. It was just north of Hastings Street, not part of Strathcona district but close to it. After I sold the house it became a real family home again. A Chinese buyer bought it, remodeled it a bit and moved his family in. I think they lived there for a long time after that.

A Duet of Worn Out Lust and Love

W: I really didn't want it initially but she came on to me at school, during the summer session. She arched her body and craned her neck down and turned her head so I could see she was smiling with her lips quivering oh so slightly. She also talked in this slightly babyish way, but not over done. All sort of contrived it seems to me in retrospect. We decided to have lunch a couple of days later, we had a couple of drinks and a good meal and then I invited her over to my apartment, always a critical point in any seduction. When we got there we had another couple of drinks and I gradually got her sweater off. I was making small seduction talk, something I'm not very good at. Anyway we got to the point where I picked her up, carried her to the bedroom and dumped her on the bed. She seemed fully ready to make love then, it seemed. I pulled off my clothes quickly while she had a few expected and almost required moans of resistance but not really.

So after removing her remaining clothes and applying the normal amount of caressing and touching and a gentle manipulation of her nipples and buttocks and vagina I entered her as deeply as I could, twisting a little as I entered and withdrew, not fully, just to the lips of her vagina where I played around a little. And then a bit later making hard thrusts into her smacking the base of the vagina, so you could actually hear the smack of our two bodies coming together. I'd lie quiet inside her every so often, to prevent coming too soon. It seemed it went on a long time, which both surprised and pleased me. She had her legs wrapped around my torso

and finally stopped pushing back against me and came with a whoosh, kind of exploded from her in a little soft scream; she was thoroughly aroused and eager. A mixture of a little playful resistance and a lot of enthusiasm blended with mutual kisses and touching parts of each other's bodies. Clearly she was pretty experienced at it but somehow there was something fresh and quite youthful about her. It was one of the best experiences of sex I've ever had, and led to consequences I hadn't really counted on. We went on much of that day rather enthused with each other, until after coming the third time I just couldn't continue any longer. It was just unbelievable. We were both of us in a semi suspended state of exhaustion by the end of the day.

C: I really didn't want to hook up with him seriously, but I'd recently had a couple of bad experiences with some guys who were really rough with me and I appreciated his gentle and more mature way. He was sort of unsure how to approach me at first and I didn't feel that much would come of it. When we went out for lunch one Sunday and he asked me over to his apartment for drinks I could guess what he was intending but he was sort of cute in a way. Quite hesitant to make the first moves at first. I thought I'd have to coax him along. After we'd had a few drinks he lifted me up in his arms and carried me to his bedroom. That came as a bit of a shock but I helped him to take off my clothes which was just light spring wear and he started right off on me. Like I say he was gentle but not too gentle.

I really didn't want to have a permanent relationship with him but he sort of worked it that way. For almost a year he paid the rent on a separate

apartment he got for me. But he got to be pretty possessive and controlling. It wasn't what I expected or wanted from him. I was still in my first year at university and it got to be too much. It got so that there were hardly any boys approximately my age would come round and visit or who would ask me out for a date. Wayne would be over at times sort of checking on me. He wouldn't say anything but it was almost as if we were married, which at the time I really didn't want.

Christ I was only eighteen. It was almost as if he couldn't get sex elsewhere, which I'm sure he could. And that gradually got to be sort of boring, even if he always had new approaches he wanted to try out. Sex was still occasionally enjoyable, but so what.

My parents were completely in the dark about the sort of relationship I was in and I was ashamed to tell them. Gradually I became fed up with the arrangement and with Wayne himself. It was just too much of the same old thing. He still had his own place. But it got to be too much to bear. I was getting to feel like a 'kept woman' as that old nineteenth century term has it; I wasn't kept very well though. Besides I liked being out and around a bit on my own, without anyone hanging over my shoulder, you know what I mean. Still and all I came to like him, but I certainly wasn't thinking of marrying him.

We were together for nine months. He turned out to be almost ten years older than me, twenty seven when I was still eighteen. Sometimes I worked and other times I didn't want him knocking at the door at any

hour. Towards the end I started out going with other men but I kept that from him because I knew he wouldn't like it. A lot of subterfuge developed in the relationship which was less based upon trust and honesty than it had been and is on shaky ground. That's an old and seemingly silly maxim but it's basically true I've found.

W: After about a year I found that almost maintaining her was just too high a price to pay for sex, enjoyable as it was. And she also was becoming rather distant. I guess I was somewhat possessive, too. While travelling around together as lovers is usual, our two different positions made it rather dangerous for me to engage in. We cut out going on trips together and we kept our trysts to a minimum, we couldn't safely do the simplest things together like going for walks while holding hands in public. It was the secretive aspect of it which began to tell on me. We didn't discuss it much but I believe that pressure told on both of us. Basically she was just too young for me, even under more normal circumstances.

C: The relationship just didn't have the right feel about it. I was beginning to feel like a kept woman if I can use that nineteenth century phrase, which is absurd. So after about a year together I decided that enough was enough. We were together by ourselves too much. About that time I began to feel that he had other girlfriends, too. And I began to feel depressed which I guess was part of the isolation I was living in. At that time I was in my first university year. I should mention that even my girlfriends usually didn't have any idea of this relationship I was in. A guy that I'd developed a crush on who was about my own age and from the sort of

family of my own background and outlook. So anyway that was really starting to undermine the secrets of that year.

Wayne was scheduled to do some research in South America the next year and as he was getting ready to steam off I broke off with him and started out on my own again. I should mention that my parents had no idea of this almost marriage-like arrangement I had gotten myself into. Going out on my own again and meeting new guys was like a breath of fresh air. I began to see all kinds of possibilities and opportunities for my future life. So that's how I got out of that relationship.

Obituary in *Vancouver Province* Newspaper, July 1946

Lee, Sung, born July 9th, 1896 in Canton, died in Vancouver General Hospital October 5, 1945. Survived by his brother Lee, Lui Ching and his two sisters, Louise Lung and Marie Ann Lee. As a teenager he helped his uncle peddling fresh fruit and vegetables from an old black T-model Ford. They sold in regular weekly visits in the south Vancouver neighborhood where he later was well known. Sung Lee was for most of his adult life a member of the Chinese Free Masons Society. He earned and saved enough to buy and restore an old house on Powell Street which became his special pride and joy. He was well known and admired in the Vancouver Chinese community. A memorial service to be held at the Strathcona United Church study hall on October 22nd. Flowers welcomed.

As American as Apple Pie

Most people enjoy or at least eat apple pie so it is a good symbol for wholesome Americanism in the world today, if you consider that something termed Americanism as something disreputable, as a symbol of reaction and political oppression or at least a derogatory allusion which indicates the extent to which the user is outside the acceptable political and moral main stream. It's a regime we hope we never become.

Take the American system of 'justice.' I myself tried to brew up some wine from them but it didn't turn out.

Let us briefly consider to what that term 'illegal' refers.

America is the last imperialist nation on earth, the survivor of a reign of more than four hundred years. It was born of the mass genocide of its indigenous people and grew on the enslavement and forced labor of millions of Africans. In to addition to that, millions of Europeans who came to America as immigrants were generally transformed into impoverished and effectively rightless serf/citizens who for many generations toiled under often near fatal conditions of work. Setting aside a handful of those who connived or stole their ways up to modest security or wealth under the prevailing capitalist conditions, which were decried even in other capitalist regimes which existed in Europe.

However, America is also a uniquely spiritual, self righteous and religious nation. Just ask them and they'll tell you: A God-fearing and supremely murderous nation of Christians, neo Zionists at various levels of fanaticism with a spawn of assorted spiritual temples, or in the words of it's own popular World War Two hymn "Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition and we'll all be free".

It is a nation with today some three and a half million prisoners in their prison system at any given time (meaning that they have been tried and convicted; but how many are guilty of any crime is an open question). Within a twenty year period more than fourteen million people have spent time in jail, convicted of some crime or another, under a legal system which now contains more than sixty thousand indictable crimes which on conviction can lead to extensive imprisonment. It may be that almost everyone can be charged and convicted of some crime or another, without ever knowing it existed. The claim that ignorance of the law is no defense for contravening it is an absolutely ludicrous stance to take, given the nature of the courts, the nature of the judges and what counts as evidence presented by a bored and often corrupt police state prosecutors. Almost anything is conceivable.

It is a nation with millionaires and multimillionaires with a growing body of billionaires, yet in which the great majority end their lives without leaving any disposable wealth whatsoever, where millions cannot find employment even in good times and where tens of millions are effectively jobless during its recurrent recessions. Where many of those who are

allegedly members of its middle class have difficulty making it from reduced paycheck to paycheck during even normal economic times. Yet all of, or at least most of whom, feel that "America is the greatest nation on earth" and who are willing to kill or die on some distant battlefield to defend that claim. A nation which proudly flaunts its old age and social security programs which for the most part are simply a continuation of 19th century charity regimes if that.

It is a nation which aggressively spreads its concept and demands for human freedom through its virtually endless wars against almost every one almost everywhere in the world. How many tens of millions of human beings have perished in American military adventures throughout the world since the end of the Second World War. Millions if not tens of millions of human beings, killed for some propaganda campaign. That's our big brother now. The utter degeneracy of it all.

The Grocer's Story

My parents ran a grocery store in downtown Toronto. Everything sold well, mainly food. They even carried some delicatessen stuff. I worked at the place as a young man for a while to help out but finally I thought I'd come out west and see what I could do on my own. That would be in 1920, just after the war.

British Columbia was booming then. Vancouver was populated mainly by English speakers and Americans. So I came here and opened a meat store and butcher's shop on Granville near 12th Avenue and later in the Kitsilano district. I had mainly a British clientele and despite the competition I did very well. I got married to a young woman then who was teaching but she left that profession and helped me run the business. I had some trouble with overly fussy customers but I did well at the shop.

But starting in the 1930s I had much fewer customers and they spent less and less so finally I just went broke there, although I did manage to sell the store to a couple who made a try at running it on their own. By that time I had an old house in the Kitsilano district so I was all right in that regard. After a long time I managed to get a job with a company that was mainly selling bulk food to logging camps around BC; retail to customers in the city and wholesale to the camps. I was working for wages then and I didn't like it. I was more accustomed to being my own boss and running the store myself.

The depression was on then for sure but nobody figured it would last ten years or more. It was truly dreadful. The company I was with laid off many of its people except for the full time butchers who worked for us and they kept the wages way down. By 1934 we were totally up against it and I had to mortgage the house I'd bought earlier. It was an old place that I had fixed up over the years. For year after year it was really grim; it was like you were trapped and the condition would go on for as long as you lived. My wife complained now that I'd caused her to leave her reliable teaching job and got her into this business. It was pretty discouraging. And still we had outsiders and foreigners coming into the city in droves and we even had a socialistic party called the CCF develop in town. They were from Saskatchewan and should have stayed there.

Myself, I always supported Mayor Gerry McGeer in his campaigns, both municipally and federally. But over the years he started to get a little silly, probably an onset of early dementia. But he didn't mince any words when he spoke. And he always had the support of loyal Canadians but not of the foreign element that drifted into the city.

In 1939, still in the depths of the depression for some inexplicable reason I decided to go on my own again. I'd got into buying wholesale meat and cutting it up for delivery to the camps alone. I had a lot of contacts with their buyers by then and we still just managed to scrabble by. It was the war time that really delivered us. I was selling all varieties of meat to all the camps without any questions of ration coupons or things like that. I don't quite remember how we got around that now. The men in the

camps certainly didn't hand in ration coupons for their meals, that's for sure. During those years I did very well. Meat was still cheap to buy then and we could sell it to the camps at a good mark up. They were glad to get it at almost any price. By the end of the war I had a fairly tidy stake saved up, and got into the retail butcher shop business again. And that's what I've been doing ever since.

By that time I was fairly well known in the business community in Vancouver. I was one of the first to back WAC Bennett in his run for the premiership under the Social Credit Party banner. Me and Grace McCarthy. We brought along a lot of Liberal Party supporters with us and that's how I again became a respectable member of the Vancouver business community.

Shipping News, Vancouver, February 10, 1948

Berth	Ship	Status	
UGG	Western Star	Loading grain	Arr. Feb. 6th
Sask. Pool	Skaubryne (Sweden)	Loading grain	Arr. Feb. 7th
Alta. Pool	B1 Olympia Parma (Greece)	Loading flour, grain	Arr. Feb. 5th
	B2 Northern Lights (Brit)	Loading flour	Arr Feb 4th
Terminal	B1 Nueva Esperanza (Col)	Loading lumber	Arr. Feb. 8th
	B2 Admiral Gomez (Panama)	Loading flour	Arr. Feb. 4th
Ballantyne	B1 Nihonjin Rodo (Japan)	Discharging manufactures	Arr. Feb. 9th
	B3 Philippine Delight (Phil)	Discharging assorted goods	Arr. Feb. 5th
Buckerfields	Global Merchant (Brit)	Loading flour	Arr. Feb. 10th
Roger's	Malmo Victorious (Sweden)	Discharging raw sugar	Arr. Feb. 10th
Laying @ anch	Olympic Queen (Greece) Idle		Arr. Feb. 1st
	Uitwandranra (Norway) Idle		Arr. Feb. 6th
	Myrdal Globus(Sweden) Idle		Arr. Feb. 4th

Extract from a Personal Letter
John Rivers, November 19, 1909

I just came down from Allison's camp up in the Queen Charlottes yesterday and got a room at "the West" -- hotel, that is. Got up and around town this morning, had a few beers downstairs and then a nap later on. I won't be getting out again this season, probably not until early next spring so I've got to be careful with my money and make it last. I don't want to have to take any old job just because I'm broke and have to. I've been that route before. Going up to see Lily later on, maybe take her out to a show or something. She's a good kid, and not skittish like young girls can be. If I'm lucky we'll wind up in bed; I could use some of that for sure. I hope she hasn't acquired a new boyfriend in the meantime. I haven't seen her for four months now.

I haven't yet met any friends of mine but they'll soon all be in and moseying around town -- most the camps will be closing down soon. But a lot of them guys are sort of haywire types -- fine to work with, they know their trades, but not so good to hang around with. They'll booze away all their money, what they don't loose through gambling. And they'll then be hitting you up for loans.

I got a letter from my mother from back home a couple of weeks ago. Ma doesn't know I'm out logging, or she'd be belaboring me with warnings of what not to do, even though she doesn't have the vaguest idea of work and life in the logging camps. She thinks I'm working in a store in Vancouver. That's fine.

You really notice how much Vancouver is a loggers' town this time of year. There are loggers and former loggers almost everywhere you go in downtown Vancouver. Where they all work is a puzzle to me. I recently read there are supposed to be more than 600 logging camps operating in the province. We've got our own beer parlors, and specialty shops and clothes stores -- all mainly geared to a loggers' clientele. Heavy worsted suits, in black, canvas dry backs and tin pants at some places and bulky red checked shirts, plus white woolen liner jackets, and loggers' work boots in certain places. Chinatown restaurants will be filled with us soon. It seems to be quite the thing for loggers to go into Chinese restaurants to fill up on Chinese food after an afternoon in a beer parlor. I'll bet you never figured loggers would load up on chow mien and fried rice -- but it's good and cheap, too.

I ran into Dennis Little a short time ago. Do you remember him from my school days? He was all smashed up in a logging accident a while ago but he seems to be getting better now. I loaned him ten bucks for old times sake, but I think he'll pay it back if he can.

This isn't the greatest life that I'm hooked up with but it will do until something better comes along. I just hope I'm not seriously injured while on the job. A number of guys I palled around with have already gotten injured in accidents in the last few years but I don't want to join them in that distinction. I'm a faller now, you know after being a whistle punk and

a rigging slinger for a long time it seemed. Just thought I'd write and tell you I'm coming up in the world, slow but sure.

May 20, 1909

P.S. I woke up with a hell of a headache this morning but got better as the day progressed. I expect to meet Lilly again the day after tomorrow, but better keep off the booze until then; she doesn't like it. I'm going to a friendly poker game tonight with a couple of young guys. It sounds like easy pickings if things turn out as they should. Well, what the hell, if they're willing to play at poker they should be ready to lose some cash, either that or really know how to play. That's my sentiments. Say hello to sis for me, but tell her not to come out here. It's no place for young women -- really, it's not.

Sincerely, your Johnny

P.P.S. Don't forget to send my 30/30 rifle. Address it to me care of the West Hotel, Carrall Street in Vancouver, BC. That'll get to me all right. They all know me here.

Diary Extract
Leo Pauler, November 1913
Translated from Hungarian

So I went from the empty gold fields of California to digging the Fraser River deposits in British Columbia, which were not much better. Am now in town for the winter staying in the Rogers Hotel in downtown Vancouver, a new city on the Pacific coast. Everybody is pretty impressed with the town but everything is sort of raw here. New with a feeling of being unfinished. I'll be glad to be on my own back in the bush again soon. I don't find anything to do here except sit around beer parlors, as they're called here, and drink beer. It's an unhealthy life. Like we used to say, "You can make a purse out of a sow's ear, but you can't make a sow's ear out of a silk purse."

Got a bunch of newspapers and books from a shop called The Universal News store downtown on Hastings; they recently opened. You can get quite a collection of reading material for a day's pay. There's a labor organization here called the I.W.W. and they put out a newspaper in Hungarian as well as in various other languages. But most of the regular newspapers and local magazines are as backward as our landowner gentlemen back home. Their coverage ranges from the doings of the local elite to fantasy stories of what's happening in the world. Mostly their range is from their kitchens to their outhouses, as we used to say. About some parties given by Mrs. Baba Haba to the sayings and doings of Madam Bonehead Barker. Just hopeless. If one were restricted to that

you'd wonder why you ever learned to read in the first place. But at least they can't shout you down as they can in California, on whatever topic you're involved with.

I think I got out of Europe just in time. There seems to be another war starting up, getting ready to break out there in earnest. Hopefully Canada won't be dragged into it. But if I can make out the ruling sentiments here, Canada will follow whatever decision England makes -- it really is like a puppy dog following along behind its master. I can already see the nonsense and the war time patriotism they will drag out when this starts. Maybe I should move to the States, where they are a bit more sensible in their international affairs. I can't see why they would get involved in a war just to drag England's chestnuts out of the fire.

Life in the United States is just about the same as it is here, although their rulers seem to have a lot more support amongst ordinary people than here, it sometimes seems. There's a larger proportion of the population that considers itself middle class and they seem to be mixed up in everything going on. They don't have anything like a separate working class culture, with some exceptions out here in the west. So maybe I won't go down there now that I think of it. They've got a lot more criminal gangs in play down there and many of them seem to work together with the law it seems, like in San Francisco. Their gentlemen and rulers keep to themselves more. You don't notice them as much as you did in Budapest. But there are a lot of people trying to ape their doings.

We had a bad a scare of pneumonia around here. I was briefly running a cafe. Strange, eh, the way things go. The people working at the cafe didn't catch it but city health authorities were constantly coming by to check up, putting their nose into everything. I think they were angling for some kind of a pay off but I wouldn't pay them. I'm twenty-eight in one month, remember. Amazing how quickly time flies.

Your,

Leo

**Receipt for Weekly Shopping List
(for two people and one child)
Fell's Farmers Market
February 16, 1950**

Fresh BC sirloin steak	\$0.50/lb.	\$1.25
Stew beef	\$0.20/lb.	\$1.20
Beef pot roast	\$0.30/lb.	\$1.00
Pork chops	\$0.30/lb.	\$1.00
Lean hamburger	\$0.30/lb.	\$1.20
McIntosh apples	\$0.20/lb.	\$0.80
Navel oranges	\$0.30/lb.	\$0.60
Pears	\$0.20/lb.	\$1.00
Bananas	\$0.30/lb.	\$0.70
Cauliflower	\$0.15/lb.	\$0.45
Brussel sprouts	\$0.20/lb.	\$0.80
Cabbage	\$0.25/lb.	\$0.60
Potatoes	\$0.10/lb.	\$0.60
Parsley	\$0.10/lb.	\$0.25
Sauerkraut	\$0.20/lb.	\$0.80
Rice	5 lbs.	\$0.60
Sugar	5 lbs.	\$0.50
Milk	1 qt.	\$0.40
Assorted pastry	10 pieces	\$1.00
Bread	2 loaves	\$0.50
raspberry jam	12 oz. jar	\$1.00
Hard candy	2 lbs.	<u>\$0.90</u>
		\$17.15

Plus assorted European sausage from Robson Street delicatessens.

(Accompanied by the astonished complaint of "My God, that's almost twenty dollars.")

Vancouver Speaking No. 4

God damn it all anyway, the 1930s, the depression was just an unbelievably horrible time which just wouldn't end it seemed, it just went on from one year to the next without any let up. People would predict when it would end or even brashly claim that the depression had already ended but it just went on and on regardless of what anyone claimed. I suppose that there were a few people who were briefly convinced by such claims but there were herds of men and women unemployed, thousands and thousands of them, drifting around the streets at all hours of the day, even "looking under stones for work" as one of the sayings of the day had it. The Federal government, whether it was that of R.B. Bennett or Mackenzie King, never produced even an unbelievable plan to tackle the depression. They just had no meaningful response to it at all, and still there were those who claimed to look up to them, as if they had a solution or even a meaningful idea of what to do.

Like I said before I'm the spirit of the city, of all of its people, not of the mayors elected or of those who back them. Not at all. I've always contained a modest left wing element among my people. But during the 1930s that number rapidly grew and got to be pretty militant at times; among men and the unemployed, of course, but also among many women as well. We had a fair number of outspoken and quite radical women, both as politicians and simply as spokespersons and members of a swathe of left wing community groups. After the shock of what was happening to people I was very proud of most of them. Vancouver even became known

as a hotbed of socialism. That was all right with me then. I certainly didn't want to be associated with the namby pamby conservative reformism of Victoria, or New Westminster as they then were.

Oh there were no end of conservative businessmen groups and the backers of assorted financial investment speculators and all those who supported them who were constantly beating the drum for some alleged economic reawakening, as well as raising childish propaganda about the threat of the unemployed and the supposed hordes of other Canadians making their way to B.C. and Vancouver to sup at the relief table which Vancouver taxpayers were allegedly subsidizing. The simple mindedness and mean spirited quality of many really began to reveal itself. All sorts of lodges, and very minor service organizations got in on the act and gave assorted tin pot orators an audience for their stupid venom. A few even began to speak openly of receiving 'tramps' and men riding the rods with a welcome of police batons, or even white hot lead if that failed.

Make no mistake about it, there was definitely the basis for fascist responses and so called 'solutions' among some Canadians of the time going back to attitudes which had already emerged at the beginning of the 1920s.

Here we had quite a young and untapped province just bulging with resources in a relatively new country with a surplus of everything that was needed to sustain life, health and economic advance and yet there was no way of converting the resources into what people needed. It was just an economic conundrum too big for our great thinkers and

businessmen to solve. So of course a swung to the left as did hundreds of thousands of others. J.S. Woodsworth was still living then, as well as his daughter, Grace McInnis, and Angus McInnis, who'd been part of me since we were both young. I remembered some of his left wing campaigning at about the end of the First World War. And of course there were the two Winches, Ernest Winch and his son Harold, both provincial C.C.F. representatives from Vancouver East, almost deified by their supporters. They were all about my age really and very much a part of the city picture, they had their own folklore attached to them. And lots of others, too.

By the middle of the depression I too figured that this economic malaise just couldn't be allowed to go on any longer. Cities of course can survive centuries of ups and downs and only mature in the process. But humans don't have that long. Ten or fifteen years of a human life can constitute the best of it and besides if difficulties proceed through too much hardship, combat and decline can sour much of peoples' remaining life as well. Despite the orders of the city government and the police, I think that the pervasive sentiment of support and sympathy my people generated to back a swathe of new union organizing efforts during the 1930s, the strikes we sustained and the overwhelming shift in sentiment to the political left during those years were extraordinary. I certainly felt it but I'm still not sure how that was achieved, since so much of the combat was so one sided, with so many of the strikes broken and lost, with a steady diet of right wing propoganda fed by the press, with the hostility of the provincial government and the courts. How did we ever manage to get so many unions established and operating during those times -- the

Fishermen's and Cannery Workers Union, the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, the Canadian Seamen's Union, the International Woodworkers Union, various unions of restaurant and cafe workers, an expansion of unions that had barely existed. A lot of men saw their organizing work as a sort of a crusade. Others who were in battles that they lost just went on to new ones. They were phenomenal times. They really were.

Shaughnessy Heights Matron

My husband has become a quite successful lawyer over the years. He handles all kinds of cases and usually wins them too; he works in criminal law, mainly robbery suspects and serious assault cases and even a bank robbery case not too long ago. He's got some kind of natural skill in presenting cases so his clients don't look too bad to the jury and judge. He manages to turn a lot of them into strictly judicial decisions, which he prefers. "People never can guess what a jury will decide", he says, and that's true. He's been at it since he graduated in law from UBC many years ago. He was planning to go into law ever since high school.

My son takes after him quite a bit. He's a leader in the Sea Cadets now and he plans to join the navy after he finishes school. He's a lot like us, but I'm not so keen on that. It means he'd probably be stationed on the East Coast and only come for visits here.

My daughter is another story. She hangs around with aspirant artists and other misfits, not even proper Canadians, some of them. I tell her there's a limit to what I'll put up with but it's like she doesn't even hear me. That's one of the travails of parenthood, I guess. She's in her second year at UBC now and I expect she'll get married soon. I hope she does and that her husband can take some firm control over her and she'll get out of the life she's been leading.

People always think that living here in Shaughnessy Heights we're all wealthy, but that isn't necessarily so. There's some wealth scattered around here sure, but not us. How should I put it? 'We were comfortably well off' but we don't have a summer cottage to go to for vacations. We do belong to the Vancouver Arts Club and the New World Players Association, but that's it. People raising money are always contacting us for support for their social or political causes but we don't have the cash to contribute. Well, we don't really.

Our neighborhood homeowners association managed to keep grocery stores out of the district and other trashy businesses like that. Actually we don't have that much power to decide property usages because there is a big house just down the block from us that rents out rooms to roomers who want an address in Shaughnessy Heights and we were never able to shut it down. It's run by a couple with two well-behaved children. We tried to get city hall to declare a moratorium on roomers in this neighborhood but we couldn't manage it. So much for our political influence.

I go to the old Anglican church on the edge of our neighborhood. It's a quiet place with quiet sermons and with a quiet minister in charge. That's just what I want in a church. Let the political parties wrangle over social issues; that's what they're there for. Our district elects Conservative representatives all the time. They're respectable, reliable and solid representatives who I trust. Mr. Bennett of the Social Conservative Credit party is pretty exciting, too. He's proposing plans for industry in all the

parts of the province, developments everywhere in BC. He been a Conservative for a long time but he's got a colorful style to appeal to the lower orders. If we're going to have Reform let's make sure it's a Conservative Reform and not one led by the party of the socialist hordes.

I didn't grow up here but my husband did. He thinks that BC and Vancouver are going to expand massively soon. Of course that's what city boosters have been saying the last fifty years. That's fine with me as far as I'm concerned. But God knows what might happen with hundreds of thousands of new people pouring in. They might be from anywhere on earth. It's not something I'd encourage or look forward to.

My Mom Said

My mom said that we kids should go up to the old reservation every so often, just to keep us grounded in our roots. She says that because we are native aboriginal we should know where we come from. But I asked my grandfather who lived on the north shore on Capilano reservation, why is that? My father worked most of his life either in the sawmill there or at loading lumber on the docks. How that helps answer who we are today is beyond me. I'd like to know.

There are supposed to be about a hundred thousand native aboriginals in Vancouver today. That is not even counting those on the nearby reservations. It doesn't even include who could pass for white men living here. I just hope that by the time I'm twenty-one there'll be reparation payments made to all native people and that I'll be able to get a house of my own. It's only fair, you know.

My brother, who is a couple of years older than me, says that his teachers at the Vancouver Native Aboriginal First Nation school told him that this is all our land, Vancouver from stem to stern and that it's his mission to see it is returned to us if the whites want to stay in Canada. That seems to be a little extreme in my estimation even if he's right. I wouldn't want my friends in school to live on reservations either. We never have, so why should they. But he's adamant about it and puts his trust in the courts to see that we get what is coming to us. Christ. I hope he doesn't wind up like

those in the Aboriginal Warrior associations. I can imagine what a Canada run by people like that would look like. Ugh.

Can you imagine depending upon a native doctor or nurse if you were sick? Oh, if they actually were qualified doctors they'd be like any others. They wouldn't be medicine men, right? But who's to pass on the qualifications? Our chiefs? People with no medical qualifications at all. No thanks. And I wouldn't want Mom to be dependent on them either. They're mainly all a bunch of charlatans with built up puffery and not much else. If people are ready to trust them with their lives, all right. But don't include me. Our great chiefs piss away hundreds of millions of dollars, holding conferences and Native Aboriginal Youth days, but when it comes to giving us any real support it's "We're out of funds right now; try again next year." Always the same.

Kerrisdale

Kerrisdale is the place, and if you include Kitsilano, it runs from the beaches to the university and from Arbutus to Marine Drive. It's really got everything that is desirable in a neighborhood. Good schools, without many multiple family dwellings, and a solid police presence so it's always possible to walk down the streets and feel safe. It's filled with safely middle class homes that would do honor to any city anywhere. A district of 40,000 today, not counting the university district.

We've been here for five years now. Everybody in the neighborhood minds their own business and lets you mind your own. Everybody lives in decent houses and the businessmen who are moving in are those from western Canada, like the executives from the Western Canadian Lumber Company. We don't have a very active neighborhood association but everybody has a sense of being part of Kerrisdale. You can just about feel it. It has all the advantages of a well established community but with none of the drawbacks.

I'm in real estate myself and I can tell you that we don't have any trouble selling properties here at a damn good price. People just know what a stable community can be like and that's why they buy here. We really filled up the streets in the neighborhood in the 1920s and 1930s. I wasn't around yet at that time but you can tell from the ages of the houses around here. But since 1950 house prices have started to level off, apart from the general rise in prices which applies everywhere in the city. Now

we're mainly engaged in tearing down the older houses and building newer ones. Nothing much is happening here except for the rise in tax rates. There's never been any trouble with youth gangs as some other parts of the city have witnessed, mainly because we don't have many kids living here which is fine as far as I'm concerned. Our local high school plugs academic concerns. I suppose it's the control they manage to keep over their kids that keeps them out of trouble. But they maintain fairly good sports teams in after school sports. We were the rugby champions of the provincial high school league a couple of years ago. We support them all the way and always manage a good turn out at their games which are attended not only by the parents but also by all the members of the school.

Selling real estate isn't much in life but I get a lot of pleasure and a good living out of it. I'm what is know as a local booster, I'm proud to say.

A Royal Banker

The Royal Bank of Canada is still one of the largest and most capitalized banks in Canada. It's been around since the formation of the nation over 140 years ago. It is one of the most reliable investment banks operating. Right from the start we didn't concentrate much in private home financing but during the recent boom years we did get into that fully. But our capital investments and my personal interests had more to do with resource extraction, processing and utilization.

I began as a junior supervisor with the bank long ago and worked my way up the hierarchy, but I was never a bank teller. I never expected to start at that level and I didn't. You'd think that gold and silver are the only valuable metals being extracted here in BC from what you read in the newspapers but there's a wide range of valuable ores being processed. Copper and lead, sulphur and iron and just about everything except asbestos, thank God.

Our financing involves well established companies with multi-million plants, billion-dollar plants some of them and includes government subsidies, taxes, stipulations and requirements that can be quite complex. We're a long way removed from the miners and transporters and workers in processing plants and the demands they make, wages and whatever. Sure their work can be sort of dangerous at times, even with all the safeguards we require in production and extraction. I'm aware that

people's lives are involved in some of these undertakings but that's always been the case in mining and extraction. It must be noted that there are work stoppages from time to time although those conflicts are far removed from our consideration. People do get hurt and even killed sometimes but hey, we're not their mothers or fathers, we're not their priests or moral overseers, either. This is a free society, isn't it? People should be free to choose what they do with their lives and what work they will undertake. If there is a two or three percent death rate in Canada because of these enterprises, the people who work in them are 100 percent sure that it's worth while. Sometimes I think it's like listening to an old CBC moral documentary, all of this nonsense about resource extraction.

Marpole and South Vancouver

Vancouver South was a separate municipality from Vancouver all the way below 41st Avenue and the river until the late 1930s I think. It was sort of isolated from the downtown core. The road into town was down Granville which ran straight past Shaughnessy Heights, up over a low hill that was still lined with tall cedar trees for a long time. The main shopping area was down along Marine Drive, around the Marpole loop over a very low wooden bridge that joined the mainland with Sea Island. It was a very low a swing bridge whose center span swung out to one side to let tug boats and log booms to go by. It was open much of the time. There were clothing stores and food shops and a shoe store and a hardware store down there. And even a movie theatre that played mainly hackneyed re-runs. But it had all that was really needed in a community. Kitty corner to the bridge and along Marine Drive which ran east through Marpole was the Old Age Asylum. It always had a sinister grim look to it because most of the people who were deposited there never came out; they all died in there. Although I did have one neighbor who went in, was treated, and came out alive. But it was a scary place.

The neighborhood was pretty well built up already by the 1920s. But if you went into downtown Vancouver, it was a streetcar ride of about forty-five minutes then. A sort of adventure for kids on weekends.

There were sawmills and log booms spread all along the north arm of the Fraser, and a lot of people worked in them, thousands probably. The center point of that whole district was the Fraser Arms hotel and beer parlor. It was a low motel-like structure right beside the Musqueam Midden. That was an archaeological site discovered way back and was quite well known to archaeologists who were always digging there it seemed. That was the one place of note in the Marpole area, not that anybody paid it any mind. Everybody would go into the Fraser Arms to have a beer. It was a kind of family pub for all the working men around there but over the years it got sort of rough. Various groups of motorcycle type gangs would hang out there, and there might be some pretty big fights take place. But finally that got to be too much for the proprietors and they started calling the police and not serving that motorcycle lot. So they pushed off to another beer parlor down the main highway east and set up shop there and the Fraser Arms became a working class pub again. That would be in the late 1950s or so.

There was a good number of East Indian saw mill workers who worked in the plants around there and they lived nearby usually. It was always a solid CCF district but over the years it came to be dominated by the hopeless Conservatives and I didn't bother voting anymore. I think a good portion of those East Indian mill workers got entangled with eth ethnic nationalist outfits, they or their children, especially those who saved up a little money or sold some property and had left the working class behind them, they figured. That's the way it goes.

East of Stanley Park

The west end of the city from Burrard street to Stanley Park was really a good place to live in Vancouver. It was mostly built up with four and five story apartment buildings that were usually in pretty good shape and very well maintained. Just a special place to live before all the cars descended on it. You could walk over to Stanley Park, that thousand acre block of forest land and wild beach front just off the core of the city. Stanley Park was an official jewel of Vancouver but they hadn't yet set about beautifying it and cutesifying it. You could walk down forest trails for miles in the middle of the day and rarely run across any people. My husband and I had a place just off Robson Street, an old but very solid apartment house. There were cafes everywhere; we went, Chinese, Greek, Indian and some Japanese restaurants all around. There were bookstores and women's dress shops scattered around everywhere as well as a few art galleries. And there were a lot of specialty food stores. I could walk to work at my office downtown in a half an hour. There was a very good neighborhood feeling, too, although I'm suspicious of anyone who claims that about an area. You'd always see the same people in stores and although you didn't know their names you might say hello to them.

But after our apartment rose in monthly rent to \$1200 for four and a half rooms, we decided to move out. That was just too much. We should have had subsidized rent I always felt. After all we were part of a respectable

middle class in Vancouver. We don't have any children so the government doesn't have to lay out anything for schools and health care for them so why can't it help subsidize people in our position. Bill Bennett was generally looked up to in the government, as I remember. People held him in considerable respect. It wasn't until Chrispy Clark came in that there was another premier like him I could support. She's a woman's woman. Not like Pierre Trudeau's son who's an extremist Liberal. She was not afraid to get up in public and make a fool of herself. A first class premier, right?

My husband was laid off a few years ago and it took some time for him to find his feet again. But we're on stable ground now. It seems to be working well with this smaller apartment that we've since gotten. But you know we earn \$70,000 to \$80,000 a year with our combined salaries, but it's still not enough. When we were growing up, in both our families, it was just the husband who worked and we were still better off than we are today. Something is just not right there. We don't even own a car because with the car insurance and repairs and other bills we just can't afford it. That's a pretty sad state of affairs. Bruce says we can have a car to drive or a house to live in but not both.

I wish Vancouver was still like it was when I was a kid. But it really doesn't make any sense to have a car here except when you're in a real hurry to get somewhere and then you can always take a cab. Both my husband and I are respectable Vancouverites born and bred. It's just not fair that we have to live with an income not much better than that of a

coastal logger which they just squander any way. It makes my blood boil when I think of it. We need a fundamental change in this country. Every time you turn around there is a new tax hike. The government is always eager to take away the money you've earned through your hard work. Mr. Bennett wouldn't have allowed such a thing to happen I'm sure. Teachers are again complaining about their salaries now. I'm glad that we had no children. It's just crazy. Let others worry about the future when it comes and let's concern ourselves with what respectable people need and desire today.

I was going to say something appreciative about Stanley Park. That thousand acre jewel of unspoiled forests and beaches just off the core of Vancouver. They finally cleared up all that waste woodland space and put in parking lots where we need them and broadened the trails so that people can walk through the woods more easily. You see elderly people wandering through the park at all times of the year taking up all the benches that are scattered around, That shouldn't be allowed. The benches are meant for all the people and that includes us.

The West End

I grew up in the West End of the city -- that's what the area west of Granville to Stanley Park was known as for years. A "West End kid" I was proud to be known. We all came from respectable homes where no one got their hands dirty at work -- which meant a lot then.

Good solid English stock we were mainly and us girls were quite some lookers when I was in high school. I went on to the University of B.C. which was then an almost totally white Anglo institution until well into World War Two. Quite homey it was. I took my degree in Business Administration and got the first of many jobs in town, it was still rather unusual for the daughter of a respectable family to hold down a full time job then. The investment businesses that hired me were rather progressive in that regard. Fellows I later worked with came from a fraternity which was linked to the sorority I was a member of. It was an arrangement we had then.

The West End was mainly all built up before the end of World War One. A very pleasant area and it remained that way and for about forty years or so. It was sort of exclusive, like Shaughnessy Heights but more democratic. Shaughnessy is where the really exclusive addresses were while we were more equalitarian and more social. But starting in the fifties more and more working class people moved in. It brought down the tone of the neighborhood somewhat. But that really happened only after I retired. The halcyon days were in the 1920s when everything seemed on

the move in Vancouver. All sorts of investment and real estate schemes were bubbling up almost everywhere.

And the upshot of that was that a lot of unscrupulous dealers made a lot of money on scams that flooded the city and an awful lot of people lost money that they could never recoup. We all thought it would just go on forever, an endless boom. But it certainly didn't. Twenty-eight was a pretty good year at least it started out that way. But then the panic struck and the bottom fell out of just about every stock on the board. And following that, whole industries started to shut down. The lumber industry, which we thought was so secure from any financial difficulties, went belly up completely. They were closing up camps everywhere along the coast. The lumber prices didn't fall too badly at first and you'd wonder what the problem was. It was simply that no one was building anything anymore, either here or anywhere across Canada. We couldn't sell the damn stuff, at any reasonable price. MacMillan Bloedel kept on with their foreign sales but the smaller companies who didn't have a foot in those markets were in almost impossible straights. Lumber production had been absolutely central to the provincial economy up till then.

But I was talking about the '20s. Well, we already had a fairly decent city core down along downtown Hastings and up Granville streets. The Rogers Building and the Ford Building and all these bank offices that were in all the new bank buildings that went up along those two main streets. The stockbroker offices just exploded, they had during the war time but this was phenomenal.

Oh yes, cars; just about everyone in the city had one even if an old one, and the garages that kept them running sprang up everywhere although they were zoned out of most of the residential districts. *But everything was booming so it seemed.*

Chinese Canadians

We of the Chinese community in Vancouver are quite diverse. We can be divided in relation to the areas we came from in China and to the extent we have retained our traditions and allegiances. Some of us are Formosan and some Singaporean. Some of us come from the far west of China. We are as different as are people from different regions in Europe so why would anyone expect us to hold a single outlook. Although we all speak one of the major Chinese languages we are really people from around the world; there is hardly a major nation on earth which does not have a substantial Chinese population in it.

We have been central to the history of British Columbia from its very beginning. We, our people, built the infrastructure of this province right from the very beginning. Oh there were a few hundred thousand others involved in that too, but you don't hear much about them. We built the railroads and we ran many of the original businesses here. We worked in the fish canneries and we were central in making Vancouver what it became a couple of generations later, a cosmopolitan, multicultural city. And we were central in making Vancouver the city it became. Now it is recognized as composed of populations from around the world.

When I was a teenager my parents always told me to marry a successful businessman. But now I've become a successful businessperson dealing in textiles on my own. But they still say that to my younger sister. Of course for young women who grew up in small towns it's more difficult than it is

for city girls. We were surrounded by non-Chinese and you hardly have a choice so it seems to them. It is a very sad state of affairs which we are trying to circumvent but it is difficult so far. Inter-racial marriage has been a minor concern but in the future it may be different. We must develop a strategy today. Male order husbands may become as accessible as mail order brides were in the past.

What we need is a Chinese Barbara Frumm today; someone who will transmit the understandings that we have an unparalleled past and superior future if we just hold together. Racial pride is the base of all social advancement. We've had Black pride, gay pride, Jewish pride -- so why not Chinese pride. We can even name a day when everyone gets out to show their pride in their racial community. It could be wonderful -- all the conical straw hats and the chow mein. We're not a financial minority any longer.

Ryuichi Yoshida

Ryuichi Yoshida was born in Chiba Prefecture, Japan, in 1887. As a university student he was part of the ferment of modernism which boiled up in that country during the first decade of this century. He emigrated to Canada in 1910 and worked as a faller in the coastal logging camps and as a fisherman on the Skeena river during most of his active life. During most of the twenties and thirties he was an organizer for the newly formed Japanese Labour Union (later known as the Japanese Camp and Millworkers Union) and a manager of their newspaper, the 'Daily People'.

This extract by-passes Yoshida's descriptions of life in the early fishing and logging industries in B.C., the struggle between progressive and conservative factions with the Japanese-Canadian community and some of the personalities hidden away along Powell street, such as Toshiko Tamura. We enter the account at the end of the 1920s when Yoshida was already married, when the conservative faction had regained ascendancy and when anti-orientalism had crystallized into legislated discrimination. The Labour Union was fighting a rear guard action when Yoshida returned to work as fisherman on the Skeena.

The account later deals with the internment of the Japanese-Canadian population in the spring of 1942, Later Yoshida and his wife moved to Toronto but returned to live and fish on he Skeena river.

They are now retired and living in New Denver B.C., near the site of the wartime internment, This extract is drawn from A Man of Our Times, 1976. R. Knight and M. Koizumi, pp. 66-76.

We [the Japanese Labour Union] had the support of some loggers, some fishermen, sawmill workers, and even some small merchants, all as individuals. But no teachers cooperated with us. They were usually on the side of the old Japanese Association. You know, a large number of the Japanese here then were bachelors. People who were parents were mainly on the side of the Japanese Association. Teachers were conscious of that tendency and of the opinions of the powerful people. People who are respected by society are usually the people who don't do anything. People who work and did something usually are not admired by society. That's the way it is.

During those years, until I started fishing again, we had great personal difficulties. My wife's heart condition got very bad for a time. I was afraid she would die. There was almost no heartbeat sometimes. It lasted for about two years. She took digitalis, which is supposed to be good for a weak heart, but there was no particular treatment, just rest. Today she is fine and I am much weakened. But in those days I was very healthy. If I had a fever or illness of some kind I would go to work and after working I would get better. I inherited a very precious thing from my parents; I received a very

good body. If I hadn't worked at that steel mill I would probably be healthy even today.

Mrs. Yoshida.

For two years I was very sick. I didn't take much in the way of medicine. No medical insurance then. Doctors' fees, three dollars a visit. There was rent to pay. So it was a very difficult time. My heart problem started after I had the child, my physical state got weakened. My heart got worse and worse, so when I was twenty-seven, twenty-eight, I could not do anything. My husband looked after everything; he took care of me and took care of the child. Our daughter had Scarlet fever and the other regular children's diseases but apart from that she was healthy. Since I was sick my husband had to stay home and couldn't go to the Skeena. He did gardening in Vancouver; he cleaned the house and did the cooking. It was very hard for him I think.

Ruche Yoshida.

While my wife was sick I did the housework. We had a very tiny room on 4th Avenue It wasn't so bad. Our daughter was only six or seven but she was very easy to look after. She was quiet and didn't cry. Some children are difficult to look after but our daughter was always smiling and friendly - as a child. Now she's quite nervous but as a child she was easy-going. It was all right. But I wasn't used to looking after a household. In those days men worked with men,

outside, and women usually had their hands full with children and the home. That's the way it was.

During that time I did gardening work, for two years. Usually I worked in the construction of new gardens, building up banks and carrying soil and rocks and timbers. I got that kind of work because I was strong. One of my employers was a very rich man with a garden as big as small farm, in South Vancouver. I built that garden from cutting down the trees to putting in the soil and rocks and streams. But I did not like gardening. Handling flowers is not my style. I am more a fisherman or a logger.

I used to be able to make about eighty dollars a months when I was working as a gardener. As the depression got worse people didn't pay me anymore. Fishing wasn't so badly affected it seems. Prices were low before and they stayed low. But at least you could make a living. So when my wife was a bit better I decided to go fishing again. I hadn't done fishing for a long time so I couldn't get a license at first. There was a quota on licenses for Japanese fishermen. I had been a Canadian citizen for almost twenty years then. I took out Canadian citizen's papers in 1914 because at the time they made the requirements more difficult. But still I could not get a fishing license like white fishermen. Only those Japanese who were veterans from World War 1 had the same rights as white fishermen. I worked as somebody's partner the first year. The next year I managed to get a license from a man who was quitting fishing.

There were sometimes fights between Japanese and white fishermen on the fishing grounds. I did not hear too much about such conflicts in the Skeena area but in No.1 district there were more troubles. Not in the Steveston area itself, but up the coast a bit, Japanese fishermen went to local places where no Japanese lived and the white fishermen there tried to exclude them from fishing. There were a few places like that.

Gas boats had already started to come in at the Skeena by 1930. White fishermen started to come in after the Japanese fishermen lost their licenses and they used engine fishing boats. The canneries had to change over to boats with gas engines. Most of the boats fishing on the Skeena still belonged to the canneries.

Those early gas boats were different from what you have today. In fact, I didn't like them too much; they were dangerous. You turned the engine by hand to start it and sometimes when you turned the engine it fired back. Fishermen often got their hands broken. Easthope engines and Palmer engines; Palmer engines came from the United States. The fishing gear was still about the same. No power drums, radios or that sort of thing. With those gas boats there was only one man to a boat. Also the numbers of fish weren't what they were before; 1,700 to 2,000 salmon was a pretty good season's catch. The canneries got bigger and our catch got smaller. Gradually fishing days dropped from six days a week to five days

and then four days during the season. Still, I was a good fisherman and I did quite well.

Once I started fishing I became active in the Skeena Fishermen's Association again. I continued my visits to various fishing camps giving talks about the principles of the labour movement and the (Japanese) Labour Union. I was supposed to help with the *Daily People* when I was in town during the winter. I used to leave for the Skeena in the end of March to do net work for the canneries. I repaired nets, tied ropes and floats to the nets and so forth for wages. Then I fished on the Skeena all during the summer. I came down to town at the end of September. So my winter was not too long.....

My daughter was going to school then. She went through school without any trouble. We didn't have any trouble with her, she was very easy to raise. We didn't demand any special thing of her. She went to Japanese language school for about two years but that was all. She could understand and speak Japanese quite well but she couldn't read or write it much. She enjoyed playing more than study. We let her have her way.....

It is impossible to discard Japanese habits for our generation. But I did not think that the generation born here should not be indoctrinated with Japanese culture. It's not necessarily bad that the Nisei (Canadian born) drop Japanese customs when they live in

Canada. So, in raising my daughter I did not insist that she adopt Japanese habits. That's difficult; you can't do much about that anyway. I have warm feelings about Japanese ways but I don't think that they are better than any other. They might be good to keep but if we have to discard them, it's all right for the next generation. Those generations born here are very different from us. We Issei (first generation immigrants) were basically Japanese. But the first generation born here are more than eighty percent Canadian in their outlook and life.

Well sure, discrimination affected our personal lives. It is difficult to pick out all the particular incidents and ways we were discriminated against. I always felt that in my personal life, it was a constant thing. Sometimes small things. Like a restaurant called the White Lunch. They didn't allow Orientals to work or eat there for many years. Sure I was angry. Many Japanese people felt they couldn't do anything about it. Whenever I would say we should do this or that to fight racism people would say, 'No. I'm not going to stay here very long'. That was always their excuse. But look, almost all who said they stayed in Canada the rest of their life and died here, leaving their children behind. I felt that even if I didn't stay in Canada forever we should still try to fight the discrimination against us. I did the best I could in trying to build up the strength of the Labour Union.

I was still on the Skeena fishing when the war started with Germany in 1939. I stayed in Vancouver that winter. At that time the Vancouver Japanese were very much influenced by the Showa (period) militarism stemming from Japan. Only a small minority of Issei was not. Various troubles and factions divided the Issei. The Nisei were not much involved in these troubles. We still continued to publish the *Daily People* but we had hardly a thousand readers. Most people were hostile towards the Labour Union and our supporters. If I was not a fisherman I could not have made a living. Nobody would have hired me. People like me, who were known, especially came across much hostility.

The canneries became very busy in producing canned fish and energizers for military use. The cannery I worked for, B.C. Packers, had a cod liver oil plant at Lake Bay on Vancouver Island. After the fishing season in 1940 I got a job at that plant. There was a whole camp of Japanese working there. Later I had a job on a boat, a packer. That boat collected cod and dogfish and delivered them to Lake Bay to be made into cod liver oil and fertilizer. The Company was trying to increase production rapidly; that was why I was able to get a job on a packer. Before that there were no such jobs available.

I was on the Skeena in 1941 but it was a bad fishing year and I didn't even make the advance money. So I went straight from the Skeena to work on that packer again. I was working on that boat

when the war broke out with Japan. The captain yelled for me to come up to the bridge to hear what the radio said. It was December 8, 1941, when we heard about it.

The next day we got into Nanaimo, where the captain was told that any boat with Japanese on it had to come into Vancouver. At Vancouver a Navy boat was waiting in the harbor. They took me off for investigation. They asked me when I entered Canada, what I had been doing up till that time. They asked me about my present job, about my family, if I knew anything about the war, what I thought about it. I told them I had been in Canada over thirty years. I was a naturalized citizen for over twenty-five years and I had never been back to Japan. I said that war was between countries, that I had nothing to do with that. I had no idea about it. After that I was set free.

When I came home the Japanese community was in great confusion. All Japanese fishing boats were towed to an island near New Westminster, where they were tied up and later sold. There was a curfew on Japanese; we could not be out at night after eight. We stayed at home. People who looked suspicious had been arrested. People were afraid of another riot against the Japanese.

What I was afraid of was a riot like in 1907, but worse, because anti-Japanese feeling was much higher than ever before. I thought that if we did anything to provoke trouble something really horrible

would happen. We could all get massacred, women and children too. But fortunately nothing violent happened before we moved out of Vancouver.

All the Japanese associations and groups were dissolved as soon as the war started - the fishermen's unions, the Labour Union, the Japanese Association, and so on. All the Japanese language newspapers were banned from publishing, only the *New Canadian* was excepted. I wrote an article in the *New Canadian* saying that people should stay calm and cooperate with the regulations. There were many rumors that the Japanese will have to do this or do that. Things did not remain calm. The Issei were very quiet but some Nisei were furious, protesting that it was unfair to treat them that way when they were born here. Different conflicts began to break out in the Japanese communityNothing was clear at first.

Then the government decided to collect all Japanese from the countryside together at Hastings Park. People in Vancouver were allowed to wait in their homes. In March [1942] the government issued the announcement that the Japanese had to move east, away from the coast. Younger Nisei men could go to the east to work. All other men and those Nisei who didn't want to leave their families were to go to road camps and their families to relocation camps. Soon after, the people at Hastings Park were sent away to camps. The R.C.M.P. went around to look for men eligible to work on road camps.

Ourselves, we stored our belongings and moved into a hotel on Powell street. We were allowed to take only 150 pounds of luggage with us to camp. Clothing, bedding, cooking utensils and some food. One man we knew had a concrete warehouse in Vancouver. He said that our belongings would be safe there. I and about ten other families stored our things on the second floor of that building. Later the watchman of the building sold or destroyed most of those things.

The situation was very complicated and in a state of disorder, with things happening all the time. I really didn't have time to feel very much. We didn't own anything, like a house or a boat or a shop. So we didn't have that to worry about. I thought that the only thing was to leave Vancouver as soon as possible. That as soon as we were away from the cities we would be safe.

I was not that worried but at the last moment Morii [a local gangster and rightwing community leader] denounced me to the police as a leader of the troublemakers. Not many years later he was charged himself for bribing the police. Although that was never proved in court, with the investigation he finally lost all his power and was not heard from again. An R.C.M.P. officer came to the office where I used to spend the days. I suddenly thought something bad was going to happen to me and I went into hiding. Since there were not so many places I could go I soon saw that I could not hide long.

So I turned myself in. The police didn't question me or anything. They just put me in a cell at Hastings Park. It was quite a comfortable jail because the warder was an old drinking mate of mine and he used to sneak in some liquor for me. My wife did not have a chance to visit me because she was just then being sent to Kaslo camp herself. About a week later they sent me to a road camp.

We left Vancouver at the end of May. All Japanese were gone by the beginning of November.

Frank White

Frank White grew up in Abbotsford, B.C., which in the 1920s was still largely a sawmill and farm service town. He began work as a truck driver hauling milk into Vancouver and freight around and out of the city during the early 1930s. With some variation, he did this for the better part of a decade. His descriptions of the people, feelings and locales along the Vancouver waterfront speak for themselves. Virtually all of the places and scenes he mentions were still present during the 1940s.

White's account also suggests how communities in the Fraser Valley were once linked to Vancouver in a manner comparable to that of coastal settlements. His story hints at the initial transformation of the Fraser Valley from a region of distinct resource and farming communities into one of urban sprawl.

During the later 1940s and 50s White drove a logging truck for gypo operations around the margins of the Fraser Valley. He also hauled logs for while in up-coast camps and later operated his own small logging outfit on Nelson Island. Frank White currently is the Pender Harbour District Waterworks Department.

I first started driving truck for a guy named Nelles in 1932, hauling milk from Abbotsford to Vancouver and freight back. The reason of why trucking sprung up all over the Fraser Valley was these milk runs. The Valley was still mainly stump ranches through the knolls but as the depression set in these stump ranchers dug in and started to produce milk - 'cause there were no other jobs for them. There was this pretty desperate fight between the Fraser Valley Milk Producers Co-op and the independent dairies. A lot of these old-style farmers were both producing more milk and getting squeezed out.

All the milk had been shipped by the B.C. Electric trams going into Vancouver. But truckers could sneak in with their trucks and pick up right on the farms, and haul the milk into town cheaper than the B.C. Electric because they could haul freight back. So right in the middle of the depression was this opportunity and trucking lines sprouted up all over the place. First they were hauling milk and then they were hauling everything.

We'd start picking up the milk around six or seven in the morning, seven days a week. Our area was mainly around Sumas Prairie. You'd hit fifteen, maybe twenty farms and then you'd beat it into Abbotsford, where we'd all meet and sort our loads of milk going to different dairies in town.

There'd always be so many guys wanting a ride to town that you had all the help you needed. One day I counted twenty-two people that got on and off the truck. They'd ride from here to there. We were on a schedule so it was almost like a bus line. You'd maybe get two-bits or four-bits if they were going into town. It sounds like small change now, but it all helped. They'd either give you something or they worked like hell.

There were no paved roads in the Valley to speak of except the Pacific Highway and we'd come rolling down that. No Patullo Bridge yet and you'd have to come across the river on the old railway bridge at New Westminster. It was the only bridge from the Valley and it'd just take one line of trucks at a time. Creep up the hill and over to Kingsway and into Vancouver. Those little '32 Fords we were driving were only four-cylinder jobs, but we hauled five and six tons on them at times. Crawling back and forth, you'd just stumble along, gearing up and gearing down all the time.

Those trucks had no goddam brakes worth the name. It was all mechanical brakes. You'd just have to use the gears to do most of the braking. You'd never be able to get away with it today. We just crawled through town. When they were just set up and working perfect these mechanical brakes were fine. But the brake rods would wear and wouldn't stay adjusted. After a couple of days you couldn't depend on them. Half the time they didn't work worth a

damn. The first half-decent truck was the '36 Dodge - with hydraulic brakes - a really nice truck.

There were these bloody horrible fogs. Nobody thinks of the now. Now if its foggy it only means you can't go fifty miles an hour, but at the times you couldn't go five. All the traffic came in on Kingsway and somewhere before Fraser street you'd start running into low spots. Bloody huge fog banks. You'd follow the streetcar tracks right downtown and you'd develop a kind of sense where you should turn. Any time it was foggy it was always a big worry how to get off Kingsway onto Fraser without nailing somebody head on. Your horn wasn't any use because nobody would know where it was coming from.

We'd have to hire kids to go in front of us, to lead us through the fog in some of the worst spots. No, I'm not fooling. Lead us with flashlights and hollering. You couldn't see anything. A lot of kids would come down to Water street, around the truck depot, on a real foggy day just for that job. Usually you'd give them two-bits or so to get you out of there. And sometimes they'd lead you up on the sidewalk or off the road and laugh and laugh and run away. I had that trick played on me. Those fogs have disappeared no, but they were just yellow mud. I ran into a streetcar once and there was absolutely nothing that I saw until I hit it.

But what I really remember about those days is not the trucks and the driving so much as the people - the life down on Carrall and around Water street and out along Powell. That's what sticks in my mind. You got to know all sorts of people through there - drivers and shippers, longshoremen and storekeepers, well-known characters, working and hanging around town there. We all knew each other, somewhat anyway. It was a smaller city, you could keep it all in your mind.

Coming into town I'd pull into Turner's Dairy of Fraser and then the Crystal Dairy over on Commercial Drive. Then I'd beat it down to National Dairy and drop off the biggest part of the load, sixty or seventy cans there. It was on Glen Drive and just off the Hastings viaduct. That was my main dairy and I hung on to it. Louie Powell ran it; he was a Greek and he supplied the White Lunch and a lot of other Greek restaurants. You could always work out some sort of deal with Louie. We were always being approached by some of these small farmers to see if we couldn't get a buyer for their milk, 'cause often they just had no outlet.

At this time a hell of a lot of small farmers shipping milk were near destitute. Their milk often went into the pig trough. Farmers stuck without an outlet a lot of times had to give it away for as low as four-fits or a dollar a can - a ten gallon can. Well, we'd bring them to town and go see Louie Powell about taking some extra milk from a new shipper. You'd go down and have a drink somewhere and

Louie'd say, 'Well alright, bring it in'. Of course he wouldn't pay the regular rate. He didn't expect to do favors for nothing. But these farmers with no place to sell their Christly milk, at least you could get them some money. Not the going rate but something better than they'd get through trying to sell it themselves. And all we got out that was the haulage charges for bringing it in.

After seeing Louie it was over to Jersey Farms Dairy to drop off a load and then out to the cheese plant or to Clark's Dairy down in the West End. After that I'd beat it down to Gibson's Dairy that I carefully saved for the last. It'd usually be around lunchtime. Gibson's Dairy was right beside the Rex theatre on Hastings and Carrall.

A lot of us drivers coming into Vancouver had arranged to meet down at the Rainier. You'd go out the back door of Gibson's Dairy, cross the alley and head into the Rainier hotel. We all had charge accounts there. That's where we'd have some drinks and arrange who was going to make what pickups around the city. When I was driving for Les McGarva we'd meet him there and he'd tell us, 'You've got this or that pickup to make'. Every couple of weeks he'd go around to the dairies and collect his money and then we'd get paid. Les'd deal our wages across the table at the Rainier and we'd settle up our bar bills there. Ernie Clark would be around to collect and he'd have to send over a round.

Ernie Clark owned the Rainier then and he advertised himself as 'The Logger's Friend'. He had some money sunk in different logging camps and he staked quite a few loggers over the winter shutdown. We had our own table down there and it was pretty lively. There'd be any number of people hanging around asking if you knew of any jobs out in the Valley. There'd usually be some messages for me at the Rainier about some little deal or one haul of another.

We'd eat at the Baltimore cafe across the street or at the White Lunch off the alley on Columbia. At the White Lunch you'd grab a meal for two-bits and if you had to pay thirty-five cents it was pretty luxurious. Or we'd go over to Kings. That'd been a famous saloon in its times, a well known part of the scene. It wasn't a saloon any more but they had a tremendous buffet laid out - steaks and pork chops and everything, so much a piece.

One thing about Vancouver then was you didn't have to go miles and miles to pick up every load. Everything was concentrated downtown. Our regular pickups were mainly along three blocks of Water street and out along Powell and from some of the docks. Arrow Transfer on Granville Island was the other hot spot. Up town, around Granville, there was nothing much of interest to us going on.

We spent a lot of time down on Water street picking up bulk orders from Kelly-Douglas, Malkin's, Swift's and the produce wholesalers for stores in Abbotsford. Three blocks of Water street was then a

wholesalers' district, so plugged with trucks you couldn't hardly get through at times. You'd hand in the orders to Kelly-Douglas as soon as you got in. But there wasn't much point in waiting around because they would never be ready much before five o'clock. So we'd go making freight pickups.

We had to hang around Vancouver till at least six anyway for the last dispatches. So it was just some hours in the afternoon you had to yourself. Otherwise it was driving from morning to night. We'd head back and get into Abbotsford about eight, maybe nine, at night. We'd have to drop off the freight we'd brought out and switch our loads again so we'd have the right milk cans to take out next morning. It might be ten o'clock before you got home. So it was a pretty full day.

Some guys couldn't stand driving in the city; it wore them to a frazzle. But, I dunno, I liked it. It was different from today. The pace was set by the streetcars. In a way it was harder to drive deliveries than now. You had to work your way down alleys and around streetcars. You might get by one of them but there'd always be another one up ahead and a string of cars and trucks plugged up behind. Slow moving traffic.

Today traffic is so God damn adept. People are expert drivers today by comparison. But at the times most people really didn't know how to drive, they drove around the city like they were out on some

country road. They hardly obeyed any rules. The few traffic lights in town were only on the main downtown corners. You just buffaloed your way across most corners, tried to get the jump on the other guy or you'd just sit there. With a truck you did a lot of bluffing. You just crawled ahead and hoped that the other guy would stop. You wouldn't dare do that today. The trouble was taxi drivers who wouldn't give anybody the right-of-way. It was like driving in Mexico today, where the guy that makes the biggest noise gets the right-of-way.

I'd often have a delivery down on [C.P.R.] pier D. That was something, a hell of a big place even by today's standards. It was always busy. You really had to know your way around that pier. Freight for all the places along the coast had their separate locations: Jordan River, Tofino and so forth. You had to know the freight sheds perfectly or you'd never come out right. We dropped off quite a few loads at the Union docks too, beef and spuds to ship up the coast.

We picked up a lot of stuff from the Mc&Mc warehouse on Columbia and Powell. It was the hardware supply house for the whole lower mainland. Then you'd head out along Powell. That was all part of our beat - but it's kind of hard for me to recapture what it was like then. It wasn't a main artery like Hastings or Kingsway; it was more of a feeder street to the waterfront. It wasn't a truck route like you understand today; it was just an easy street to drive. I once picked

up a donkey [engine] up in Harrison and hauled it into Arrow Transfer. It was over-width and over-height and it was miles overweight. So I hauled it down Powell.

Buckerfields was down there. They were a big distributor of feed for all through the Valley. The bigger dairy farmers started using mixed feed instead of growing their own oats. So we hauled a lot of that. A hundred, a hundred and twenty sacks of mixed feed a load. You'd back under chute in this shed alongside Buckerfields' elevator. Guys working on the second floor would fire these feed sacks down but you'd have to throw them into the back of the truck yourself. It was a bloody workhouse, the way they drove men was incredible. The men would try and grab a couple of minutes for a smoke between trucks. 'Sh-sh', no talking while working was the rule there. Old Fred, the foreman, he'd be ranting and raving if you stopped two minutes, 'Come on, get that truck loaded and out of there. We gotta get trucks in here'

Trucking was really just getting organized. At first there wasn't any real control of loads. Anybody hauled damn near anything if they could get the job and figured they might handle it. It was a pretty freebooting situation. Later, when they got these conditions of load licensing and started to make things stick, there was no more room for this jumping around from one thing to another.

For some years we had a lot of hauls taking equipment from logging outfits around Chehalis and Vedder Crossing, going down to the docks to be shipped up-coast somewhere. I always liked a load to the docks; I don't know how to describe it. We were still experimenting with hauling different loads. You'd have to puzzle out how to get something on or off best. It seemed like we were always trying something the first time. Now with big machines the load's on or off - zip, nothing to it. But then it was all huffing and heaving and back power.

Those longshoremen, they were something. They their union and there weren't many unions around worth the name. Yes, there was a Teamsters union, but they didn't amount to a hill of beans. Us guys were always a little awed by longshoremen that earned real wages and worked eight hours a day. We didn't know what an eight hour day was. I had some good friends who were longshoremen.

Sure I enjoyed driving. But the way we worked could be condemned out of hand today. Do our regular hauling, hustle around and beat it back out to pick up an extra load. It often meant that you worked a stretch of thirty hours straight to earn some bucks.

There were big labour battles going on all around, going on in that part of Vancouver all through those years. I wasn't myself involved. Yet we were right there in the middle of it: the longshoremen's strike and the Post Office occupation. But we were working and this

other stuff was just part of the scene. You'd wish them well and maybe drop some money into the can from time to time but that was about all.

Nelles was the first guy I worked for. He couldn't assure us regular wages but some of the freight was prepaid so we'd collect that much of our wages for sure. Later on I worked for Les McGarva and wages were a little more certain. But we had different angles of using the truck to make a little money on our own. Once you had covered what loads McGarva had lined up you could try and rake in something on the side for yourself. One thing about it, you never knew what would come next, always something different. We were always looking for a load somewhere without Les McGarva finding out.

There were about eight or ten of us drivers working all the angles we could. You'd maybe bring in a load for one of the farmers. Or there'd be somebody moving or wanting something hauled cheap - we'd be right in there. What we made on the side might seem like small change today, but it all added up. Mostly all those deals came through our table at the Rainier. It seems strange now, but that's the way trucking was done then.

One deal I had going on the side was with this blacksmith. There were still quite a few blacksmiths around the Valley and they used a good deal of coke. Every so often I'd haul coke from the gas works

down by the viaduct out to Harry William's blacksmith shop in Aldergrove. You'd duck into the gas works and throw ten sacks of coke on the tailgate and take it along on the way home. He'd always be in the market for steel from old axles or mainsprings or something. He turned out wedges and sledges and loading tongs and logging shackles. They were handmade and always sort of expensive. You'd trade this coke or steel for what you could get from him, then take it down to peddle to one of the hardware stores in town that handled that stuff. Whatever you made was velvet for the Driver.

Or another angle was the deal I had with the Mainland Foundry, a black-looking place with flames roaring inside. I was fascinated by it. They would always take some of this special foundry sand that was used as their floor. Just this side of Abbotsford was a bunch of sand that was just right as foundry sand. So if here was nothing else I could run out there and haul a load for them.

Other times I'd stop and pick up a load of lumber at the lumberyard on the corner of Wall and Powell. Maybe I'd have a beer with the shipper in the Princeton, which was around the corner. I'd haul loads of this third-grade lumber out to Abbotsford. I sold it for damn near peanuts and people would use it for barns or sheds or whatever.

Heading home, sometimes, I'd drive up Wall Street just for change. I used to go out that way to get to the Barnet Highway. Two or three times a month we'd haul oil in drums from Union Oil on Barnet Highway. So I'd duck out east on Wall street. It was a sort of enclave, little houses, a lot of bush still. You'd see the inlet from the cliff; I'd cut up past the shingle mill at the end of Wall. That sawmill was always in trouble with its burner throwing up ash and sparks over everything around there. Then back to Hastings and out to Union Oil below Burnaby Mountain. That was way out in the country then.

For a while we bootlegged spuds. See, there were a lot of Chinese market gardeners leasing five, ten acres of land on Lulu Island and around Sumas Prairie growing early potatoes. When the Potato Marketing Board was brought in these Chinamen more or less were frozen out. That was part of the idea behind forming the Board in the first place. So the only way these Chinamen had of selling their spuds was to bootleg them. That must have been before the Patullo Bridge opened because I remember sneaking across the old railway bridge at night with loads of black market spuds.

Two drivers would get together. With a five-ton truck we could make up to forty bucks a load on these bootleg spuds, which was really big money. My partner would take the milk cans in and pick up the freight and I'd duck into one of these Chines farms, load up with spuds and run them in at night. We'd sneak the load off the

Valley and into town and pull into some cafe or house or back alley in Chinatown with a load of spuds. It got to be pretty organized after a while. You'd pull in and twenty men would appear from nowhere and unload in no time flat.

That produce was bought by the Chinese wholesalers; a lot of them bankrolled these Chinese farmers, put up the money for renting the land and getting seed and what not. There'd be labour contractors who'd arrange to bring out groups of Chinese women and men to do seasonal work on those farms. The spuds we brought in would go to the grocery stores or go out through Chinese peddlers in their black Model T trucks, There must have been quite some mechanics stuck away in Chinatown to keep them running because they just ran and ran. I didn't understand half the ins and outs of the politicking behind that Marketing Board and the black market trade. Our part of the deal was over when we delivered the spuds. They were quite happy to get them.

Our time off we'd spend in the Rainier or one of those other places around there, the Savoy hotel or the Columbia or the Stanley. There were lots of them. Everyone that you knew was down there. Each one of those hotels had its own atmosphere and regular clientele. Now I wonder how we had the time to get around to all the deliveries and pickups and still have time to sit in beer parlors. Dutch and old man Parbury, Les Groat and his brother Bob, myself,

Les McGarva and a bunch more. They're all gone now. Usually you had a fair amount of booze in you before you left for home.

Around Carrall street it was a sort of tenderloin district, yes. But different than people can imagine today. There'd always be people around talking. People stopped and talked to each other a hell of a lot more. Sure enough there were alcoholics around. But yet it was a friendly place, a place where loggers came to spend their stakes after working for two or three months in camp. They came down to Vancouver - which was Carrall street, 'Smokeytown.' Even if they were on their way home to Strawberry hill or somewhere they spend a bit of time down at the West or the Rainier or somewhere.

Some talk about how tough it was, but it wasn't. About the worst you could say was that there were people there who wanted to get drunk and there were others that wanted to get their money. True enough, if you went down the streets flashing money I suppose there'd be a good chance that you'd get rolled. But with normal care you never had to worry about your safety down there then.

Coming from a small town to drive truck around the city, well, that was *living* as far as I was concerned. Hauling into Vancouver, that was the real life I thought. Hell, what does a young feller want anyway? Just to keep roving and wrestling things up. I hauled into Vancouver for nine years steady, till '41. Then later, off and on, to help Les McGarva. I drove close to a million miles on that job. But I

don't know I liked it. But we were pretty hard-driven too. In truth you were driving or picking up all the time and what spare time you had was spent downtown. Of course, after I got married it didn't work out anymore. My wife got me off that job pretty quick. I started to Drive logging trucks for Bill Schnare off Vedder Mountain about that time.

I used to spend so much time down around Carrall and along the waterfront. And yet it's hard for me to come up with a description of what it was really like and how things have changed. It used to be just a lively place where the action was. But today it's sleazy, worse than sleazy. In the last twenty-five years those places have deteriorated so much that even the 'no goods' don't hang out there any more. Loggers don't come into town much now. They've got a family and a home in some place like Port Hardy. There's no friendliness in any of these places now, even when they take you money.

Vancouver is a new kind of clip joint town. It's not interested in logger's stakes anymore. It's the money of this swarm of businessmen and travellers with expense accounts that attracts the operators in Vancouver today. They spend two, three hundred a night on accommodation. Our stakes were peanuts compared to that.

I don't know if I can make it any clearer, I haven't resolved it yet.
Thirty years before it had been the hub of town, it was the hub of
our town. Now forty years later that world hardly exists any more.
Certainly not down there.

A Voice of the Early Women's Movement

The 1920s were a glorious moment, I had been a member, with my mother of the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire, a respectable women's organization involved in defending our British heritage and a proper way of life here in Canada, supporting the British Empire from assorted cultural attacks by alien elements that had somehow gotten into our country and in various ways were attempting to undercut the Canadian people's allegiance to Great Britain. We were especially involved in defending the nation from peddlers of booze and immorality, especially the sexual kind, which was a very big problem then. You wouldn't believe it but we actually had houses of prostitution operating openly on certain streets in East Vancouver--well, among loggers and dock workers and those kinds of people, maybe even among some seemingly respectable men. We knew what some men were like; people with sweaty and dirty souls even if they wore clean white shirts and spotless suits.

Well I remained a member of the IOODE even after I gradually dropped out of their weekly activities. It was their lack of action to protect our innocent little kiddies and school children from child abusement and amusement. They were aware of all sorts of threats to infect our kiddies' carefully protected minds from the subversive mistakes of the day. So for a while I was active in the Mothers and Children's Protective League, a truly active defense organization. Our first and primary activity was to defend girls and young women from being drawn into, you'll pardon my words here, being drawn into sexual activity, ranging from illegitimate

kissing to touching and holding personal parts of each other's bodies and even participating in the most personal of such activities that can be imagined. We saw or feared some of our children sliding into it all too easily. Winding up ultimately as dishonored and cast aside women who might further descend into becoming alcoholic service providers in brothels. It was a nightmare which gripped many mothers of respectable girls of the time, although it was mainly members of the lower classes, aliens and others with no sense of morality and with no prospects to look forward to who staffed such locales, like Marie Gomez's and Faye Packer's places down on Alexandra Street, down beside the harbor. We made regular deputations to city hall to eject houses of prostitution from our city. We even mobilized some mass rallies to achieve that and for some years it seemed we were winning the fight for your Christian morality. There were Chinese and other Asian houses operating in the city too but I can't say we were too concerned with them. They didn't cater to a white clientele anyway. Maybe some seamen or sailors patronized them but they just didn't figure in our concerns. Which was to protect our children and young women so they could enter into the estate of marriage pure and unsullied. And the same for our boys. There was even a Native Indian organization which grew up and was briefly associated with us called The Christian Native Mothers and Sisterhood of British Columbia, that was strongly backed by their own church. They later merged with The Native Brotherhood and imparted a moral tone to that organization.

We were all Christian Protestant. Prohibitionist toward beer, wine and liquor and also tobacco, as well as deathly opposed to the sex trade and

sexuality in general, whether it be in fact or hinted at in public movies and books. We were quite successful in mobilizing pickets of movie houses showing what were clearly sexually immoral films. We were pure in the deepest sense, racially and in every other way.

But in general it seemed to be an up lifting epoch. Of course we knew that contraceptives were being sold in some of the sleazier pharmacies in downtown Vancouver and we did manage for quite a few years to have such sales suppressed, despite all the growing arguments that such actions would only increase the incidence of various sexually transmitted diseases and greatly increase the incidence of born out of wedlock babies. Our reply was that sex performed within properly controlled marriages would eliminate both such pregnancies and diseases. Such concerns did not seem to have had the impact that we expected it would. And with the economic and moral chaos conveyed in the 1930s we lost the battle against birth control except through personal restraint entirely. Almost totally, so that by the time World War Two rolled around the feeling of younger men *and* women was that life was pretty short and that it was best to enjoy what you could for as long as you could. It was an attitude which had emerged and grown throughout the 1930s. We seemed powerless to effectively oppose it, amoral as it was.

So gradually, or actually rather rapidly, most of the original women's movements began to falter and fall apart. By the 1949s they were gone. It was the 1960s and even later when it got to be important again.

I really didn't want my daughter involved

I just don't want my daughter to be involved with it but I wanted her to be an independent woman. We hear enough about it as it is. Even if she was one of them she should never have been involved. It's amoral as well as being degrading. Surely the church has it right, when they held that these people draw in others, especially people who think and act like children. We had some early indications of what she might become. We should have known or at least guessed, but she never made any advances toward boys.

But I only fully realized when she left a half a year ago. It was crazy. After a while she began demanding that the provincial health authority should subsidize her activities and provide her with pretexts for her work. It was not only crazy on her own part but on the part of the organization which supported her. Tooty fruity nuts; she should have stayed with them and found other charlatans she could talk to. Happy or not happy.

I don't know what she'd say today. Let's face it. She's a frenzied feminist. What the hell. She really thinks that the fundamental division of the world is between men and women, that class status is irrelevant. She feels that men are the oppressors and women are the oppressed and that she is on the side of the oppressed. All with a safe job and a good middle class income, of course. All those millions of men and women struggling to achieve union recognition and rights, it's all irrelevant to her. Her father won't talk to her anymore and doesn't even want to talk about her. He's

written her off as unsalvageable. Sometimes I feel like that myself. But she's my daughter, after all. What makes me especially angry are those whipsy doodle university students and others their age, who sustain supportive organizations for these fantasts and feel they're supporting the oppressed. What utter stupidity. It's as though class struggle has been supplanted by feminist struggle. And they're making a lot of headway these days. The bosses must love that.

Some years ago when she was still going out with men sometimes, she knew this quite pleasant and polite young man who I thought a lot of but it turned out that he was from one of those support organizations. It's fairly prominent these days. What he saw in her I don't know. She's quite pretty actually but they couldn't have been sleeping together because she is against inter-gender sex totally. Maybe he wasn't even into dating women and she was just mentoring him.

She won't even come around to visit anymore. Says our home just reeks of sexism. Was that always the case? Or did that smell only develop after she was seventeen and went out on her own? I don't know, I really don't. The organization that she is with runs a number of refuges for verbally abused women. They go there and get a bed for a week or two and have counseling talks given by other women. Oh my God. My own parents surely didn't have anything like that to contend with.

What's this city coming to? The West End used to be just a warm, safe and fashionable place where people could walk to the downtown area and still

be close to Stanley Park and the beaches. There were shopping streets around, but not too many of them. Rents weren't so fantastically high, and the houses were priced so you could imagine buying one if you earned a good income and saved up for a long while. But now the house costs and the rents have sky rocketed. Those droves of middle class feminists, who first emerged here, will have to accommodate themselves elsewhere now, and find some explanation of why its all due to a sexist plot.

Shipmate Mike James

I'm from Britain originally but Vancouver is my home now, I feel comfortable here down in Strathcona with my retirement check coming in each month. I can't understand the conservatism which has swept over this city in the past few years, which still has so many otherwise decent people living here. I suppose it's partly because working people are fed up with the oozy respectability of the Nude Democrats and are put off by the wishy-washy Liberalism of the Trudeau junior gang. But still--to vote for Stephen Harper's gang of cash creationists--it's unbelievable. I'm not engaged in politics myself anymore although I once supported left wing parties. Neither are my girlfriends. We just maunder along each day as it comes. I'm 80 now, it seems incredible but I still feel the same as when I was 30, but increasingly bored with life as it goes. I'm just about ready to cash in my chips. To hell with it all.

This part of town still has the feel of what Vancouver used to be like without the petty ante wheelers and dealers and peanut peddling free enterprisers everywhere. God knows how long that will last. My friends that I used to know are dropping off pretty fast now, almost every month one of them has died. But I've made friends with some of the families around here, too. So I'm sort of bored but not yet ready to trundle off the scene.

I still read a lot. Got a bibliography of left wing novels called *Traces of Magma* which I got from the Vancouver Library. Thought I knew all the

titles there were. But I still run across some surprises today. Moose, the guy you met when you were down here. He was in the C.S.U. strike in the 40s. I see him quite a lot and we spend some of the days along the waterfront, which he still keeps up with. Like the supply boat that stocks the supplies and stuff that will be used by the camps up the coast, which was a run I was on for many years. It gives me a lift to hear such things still going on. I'm just a half mile from the docks and sometimes I mosey over there to see what ships are in. But I guess I'll cash out right here although I still feel healthy.

I haven't had any contact with the Communist Party in years--they used to be pretty influential in the unions here in B.C. But all the people I knew in it are dead or retired now. What the hell happened in the Soviet Union, to just collapse like it did? Its leadership must have been rotten to the core to allow that to happen without a fundamental fight I don't know. It's simply incredible what's happened. But all the forces and realities and deeds of capitalism still are in effect so how are people going to deal with that?

Chinese Canadian Businessman

I wasn't born in Vancouver. I came down from Kamloops and lived with an aunt I had here while I was going to university during the Second World War. Yeah, UBC, it was mainly a white university then ... a daughter of the local middle class. But we Chinese had a pretty active social life there, too. My parents wanted me to become an engineer but that didn't appeal to me at all so I went into business administration which was still in its infancy then. I had a lot of fights with them about that but luckily I stuck to that decision and graduated with a degree in business administration, in which I specialized in imports/exports. That's how I got my first job with MacMillan Bloedel, selling lumber to China. I didn't go to China much, of which I knew almost nothing really but just peddled lumber from B.C. sitting right here in the city. No, I never lived down in Chinatown, but bought this house that I'm still in here in Kerrisdale and fixed it up. It's quite nice. I used to throw a lot of parties here, one a week anyway, and I had a lot of friends from out of town.

My wife was born here in Vancouver and went to school here. She made quite a name for herself at Britannia high school over in the East End of the city, although she doesn't like to dwell on it now. Our kids first went to a private school in the 1950s but then to John Oliver High where they were part of the student government.

Our eldest daughter was attracted to a white boy but we tried to discourage that and when it seemed they might get married we really put our foot down. Finally she married a local Chinese guy from a fairly prominent family so we collectively breathed a sigh of relief.

Selling lumber got to be boring after some years and I got fairly deeply involved in a local Chinese organization, what the whites used to call Tory Tong politics. A few of them were still Tongs but mainly they were the social wings of business associations. We'd put on cultural performances and music shows and for some years we established security guards for our children when the streets seemed to get pretty rough. My kids criticize me for that but I think that's where they get much of their news.

Salt Water City they used to call Vancouver and I guess it was. There was a fairly substantial number of Chinese working people in the city and a lot of them were tied to fishing and cannery work. You'd meet them scattered all the way along the coast. I'd run into them when I went out to investigate some of the lumber mills we dealt with. Many of them were more white than they were Chinese and were mad that others didn't appreciate that. Well, so what. Their parents usually told them and stressed the fact that they were Chinese and that nothing would change that and by the time they were parents themselves they sort of accepted that. I always felt at home in Vancouver, I had my favorite restaurants and shoe shops and other places. All my friends lived here. It was home so far as I was concerned, what more can you ask of a place than that. A lot of people in the 1960s used to go around discovering anti-Chinese

discrimination. I guess there is that but you can find that sort of thing anywhere. Certainly we aren't free from our own kinds of discrimination either, you know.

I travelled up and down the coast for some years visiting the various sawmills that we dealt with, trying to get some of them to produce lumber of the length and thickness that our buyers in China wanted. It was the most enjoyable work of my job. I'd get a folding chair from somewhere and sit out on the deck of the ship all day watching the coast go by. It was what I really missed when I moved up the chain of offices and had to sit in my office in Vancouver all day arranging for purchases and sales. Occasionally I'd go down to the harbor to watch our lumber being loaded onto the deck of deep sea ships carrying it to China and Formosa. That always gave me a charge.

Chuck Woodward

My father came to Vancouver from back east in Ontario in the 1890s and started a store on Main Street. It did pretty well, mainly food and cookware, but he had dreams of a new kind of store, a department store offering all kinds of goods a solid working class family would want to buy. So when he shifted to what became known as Woodward's he established that kind of store--a department store. There were two others like it soon after--the Bay and Spencer's. We were then in what was the heart of the working class shopping district in Vancouver and we soon had a loyal clientele. We had everything from fine porcelain to sturdy men's work boots, from sporting rifles to books--we had one of the best bookstores in Vancouver for years. That and a candy counter used to draw people from a wide range. When I was going to school my father perfected that department system so that by the 1950s you could get anything you could possibly need at our store. And shortly afterward he had a huge revolving neon "W" placed on the top of a spire above the store which you could see from miles in any direction, even out to sea. It was a Vancouver landmark, neon lit at night. That always gave me a bit of a boost to see it turning there. Anyway, we were probably at the core of the city during the war years in the 1940s. You'd find women in their paint-spattered overalls, coming off the North Van ferries, fresh from a shift at the shipyards. Our window dressers always put on a good display at any time of the year boosting our various clothes and other items. But at Christmas we'd devote most of our main floor window space to Christmas scenes, occasionally with living people sitting in our displays. That caused quite a

stir the first few times we did it. The entire street would be looking in at our displays. Cornish? Not at all.

I was chief of staff for many years before I took over the business when my father retired. I think the store was really the main part of his life because he only lived a few years after his retirement. Our staff was unionized quite early, which was unusual then for retail stores. But we had a lot of company loyalty, too. We always treated our employees well, not like some of our competitors. People were proud to work at Woodward's.

In any case, my father retired and shortly after I became head of the firm. It was quite a responsibility, both to our own family and to all the people who worked for us. I saw the shifting sales going to the shopping plazas which were then springing up all over the place and I wondered how we could get a share of that trade. So I made the decision to go into a few of the malls and at first we did quite well in them. But for some reason those stores never developed the customer loyalty our original store had. They couldn't stock the full range of goods we originally relied upon. I suppose that was part of it and some of them developed a taste for kitsch which I never cared for and tended to cheapen the other goods we carried. I should say that right from the start our main store on Hastings and Abbott streets carried quality work wear. If it was work shoes they were sturdy well-made men's shoes that could be resoled again and again, if it was clothes it was stuff like quality Harris tweed. We had buyers who

clearly knew our customers' taste in goods, and knew the stuff that was both attractive and made to last.

Basically it was our suburban mall stores that did us in. We had stores in Kamloops and Kelowna and Nanaimo--you name it. Abbotsford and Langley. They were always falling behind the local competition who offered comparable but cheaper quality goods which the consumers would accept. So our buyers started to go into those lines too, which was a big mistake because our reputation for quality goods soon suffered and people just came to look at us as just another store, no customer loyalty at all. We kept those mall stores open for too long. Finally I decided that we should re-concentrate our concern with our main store, which we did in the end, but by the 1970s it was too late. We never did get that base of loyal customers back again. I once heard a kid, a teenager, say if he went downtown to shop he'd go to Woodward's first and if he didn't find what he wanted he'd only then go to other stores to see what they had. Well, we lost that. We still tried to keep up our commitment to offering quality goods at reasonable prices but we didn't have the customers to support it. So finally we had to close down all our suburban stores and our downtown store. That was it. I think a lot of people felt that we were closing down a main part of their Vancouver.

We were still living in our main house on Southwest Marine Drive and we'd still have prominent actors and world figures staying with us from time to time so that was what I myself retired into, earlier than I wanted to.

Now the store has been totally rebuilt and is an expensive condominium which adds a certain panache to that part of town. I suppose that's all to the good. But I rarely go by there anymore. It's too painful.

Knight on Writing Social History

My first two books were versions of my MA thesis and PhD dissertation, the first on ecological study of changing trapping patterns among the James Bay Cree of Rupert House and the second a version of my PhD dissertation, a study of changing aspects of sugar cane production and labor in the Cauca Valley of Colombia. Both fairly obscure topics but which raised a number of active responses in the 1960s and 1970s. My MA thesis was published by the National Museum of Canada. It probably wouldn't be today.

Why I went to Colombia to do research for my PhD requires a comment. I had actually intended to do the sugar cane study in socialist Cuba. I had actually won one of the few study grants offered by Columbia University to go there. Everything to do with Cuba was boycotted by the U.S. government. Colombia's support under those conditions impressed me tremendously. But after trying and failing to get permission to do that study from various Cuban officials in Canada, I shifted to doing it in Colombia which I knew from an earlier field trip there. It was all right but it didn't unearth anything new and as yet un-researched. The main thing about Colombia was the free-floating violence and blood letting that touched whatever you did and wherever you were. I got to know a number of cane workers there whose lives I deeply appreciated but for some reason didn't do their life histories which would have been a real contribution, despite others which produced them elsewhere. After I rewrote and published my PhD dissertation in the 60s, early 70s I was at

sea and didn't write anything again until I did my mother's life history in the 70s. Then I went back to New York to teach for two years.

My first real book was my mother's life history entitled *A Very Ordinary Lifer*. I was half expecting some undergraduate student to raise some pseudo Freudian imputation about a writer writing about his mother's life, but that didn't happen. It was fairly well received and reviewed but it was still another decade before my next real book came out.

In fact it was in the late 1970s when I switched from being a full time university anthropologist to become a full time writer and over the next 40 years I turned out about ten life histories and other books, and wrote four unpublished volumes. Fourteen books in 40 years. Not too bad a record even if some were never published. There were some of them that I really think were excellent. *A Very Ordinary Life* was the first of them.

In all I wrote a dozen books, most of them fairly well received except for the chronic complainers for whom anything and everything they came across is lethally flawed. There are three or four books that I'm really proud of: *A Very Ordinary Life*, *Indians at Work*, *Along the No. 20 Line* and *Traces of Magma*. The first is a life history of my mother from childhood to old age. She was gradually dying when I started it and actually died shortly after it was published. I'm glad I did that while I still could. It is a memorial to all of the courageous, decent ordinary people in Canada and elsewhere who leave no traces of their lives behind them when they pass. *Along the No. 20 Line* is an account of the Burrard Inlet, Vancouver

waterfront during the late 1940s. There are reminiscences of about a dozen people strung around an account of a trip on the No. 20 streetcar line at the end of the 1940s. That book almost wrote itself. I'd sit in our basement and talk into a tape recorder as well as making notes and it all just flowed put as I moved into it. The No. 20 streetcar ran from what was then the core of downtown Vancouver out to the Hastings Park racetrack which was definitely in the eastern suburbs then. I like it a lot and it does really capture a part of my youth and its surroundings. I threw out about a half of the text away because it became too long.

Then there was *Traces of Magma*. Some reviewers complained about the word magma saying that the reference was obscure and didn't actually convey what the book was about. To me it did. Traces are all that are left of that magma, which flowed from a super heated core to the surface. It's a bibliography of some 3,000 left wing novels about working people and their struggles in 90 odd countries. Naturally I hadn't read all the titles myself because many were un-translated from their original language, like those in Amharic and Arabic. But I'd read many of them and others of their authors since I was a teenager and it gave me a sense of completion to list them all and provide something of their themes. It was like a repayment for all I'd appreciated and learned from them. A rather personal feeling.

And then there was *Indians at Work* issued in the mid 1970s, a systematic account of native Indian labor and work in B.C. from the creation of the province in 1858 to the beginning of the great depression in the 1930s.

That involved a hell of a lot of real work, the survey of provincial government reports and ethnographies. It was well received except by those who just won't believe that native Indians can be considered as a part of the working class. Natives were on the labor scene but not part of it, some held often quite dogmatically. Screw them.

I also wrote about four life histories which I felt were pretty good. One about that of a Japanese fisherman in BC since 1910 and three accounts of a couple of homesteaders in the Peace River and in Saskatchewan who migrated to Vancouver in the post War Two years. Plus a biography of Homer Stevens, the General Secretary and leader of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union from the late 1930s to the 1970s, an unapologetic but broad minded communist. That elicited less lying and fewer hate mongering reviews in response than I expected.

Also an autobiography called *Voyage Through the Past Century* which was derided and venomized about by a new improved SFU professor called John Belshaw, who I should have replied to in kind but didn't.

I was enthused about writing all of them. The only person who complained about them was Helen Potrobenko, who sent a couple of very bitter letters about her father's account in *Along the No. 20 Line*. She stressed the fact that he was Ukrainian and not Soviet and she demanded that I stop all future sales of the book. I wrote back and politely told her she could go fuck herself. How such a wonderful person could have produced such a mean spirited daughter is beyond me

I also wrote four books that appeared on the Internet. I would be happy to have them published but no publisher would touch them. So that seems to be the end of my writing career, which earned me nothing at all except for the royalties I got from Harbour Press for the Homer Stevens book.

I wrote for about forty years but when I got to be about 80 I quit writing-- it didn't make sense any more, so to hell with it. But I now feel there is something missing in my life.

Loggers, 1950s

I just came down from the camp up in Bute Inlet. God, what a place. Flies the size of wasps; they'll bite any exposed flesh in less than a minute. Our boss wouldn't shut down no matter what the weather was like; rain, snow, sleet or what have you. We'd be out there with our chain saws, cutting them down, lopping off the branches and cutting the logs up to the proper length. Ten hours a day, it went on and on because the boss had a contract with a mill to fill. I've read stories of how logging was done here in the past and I don't think it's basically changed at all. Have you ever read Frank White's account of operating a small gypo operation on the coast near Pender Harbor in the 1930s? Well, it's just the same now; maybe a bit worse. They've eliminated a lot of the really small outfits which hasn't improved things any.

I knew logging wasn't for everyone. There were more than enough unemployed and poor people in the city, there has always have been boom times and slack, but it had the feel of a boom city to it. It's true. There are still some white supremacist organizations in the city like the KKK from the states. They're opposed to and have targeted all those they considered "foreigners", anyone who had immigrated to Canada in the previous ten or twenty years. But they generated their own opposition by those they targeted.

Working people weren't involved in that much. Oh for sure some were but not many. There was no end of socialist groups around, too. A social

democratic party, a labor party, a socialist labor party and others as well. We never paid them much heed, not until the 1930s. The Labor Union movement was going strong but it was led mainly by reliable and responsible leaders who could keep workers' demands in check. Nothing to worry about there. From about the mid 1920s we also had an emerging Communist movement, too, which might have appealed to European immigrants but they didn't have any base here. Not until the next decade.

You know I could have, almost anyone with a steady job could have, retired as millionaires. If we had only moved into acquiring real estate. Just down payments on city real estate, it was really extraordinarily cheap then, throughout the 30s and 1940s. But who could then? Who would even have thought that prices would rise so phenomenally? Some people claim that the prices are going to go up a hundred fold, but I don't believe that. Of course that's what everyone thinks in retrospect but at [resent we're all just hanging on, living from month to month. Living decently, mind you.

Still, some did invest in land and they're the upper middle class today. Or their children are.

The last time I was looking for a job I was so desperate that I actually went down to the Unemployment Commission Service and they put me through their tests to see if I was adaptable to any special industry, of which they knew nothing at all. I finally told them I'd graduated from

college which put them off completely. They figured I should be looking for work at an office. Maybe like their own. I suppose they think that loggers are from a lower order, bush apes I suppose. They told me I should aspire to something better.

Pork and beans, pork and beans, pork and beans, I say.

When I get to heaven, pork and beans, I'll say.

Oh porky, oh porky.

Vancouver speaking last

The 1980s may not have been the worst of times but they were depressing enough for me. I passed into my second century as a city and became what I'd never wanted to be, a Canadian San Francisco. Coffee house enterprises sprouted up everywhere and it became almost impossible to find any loggers in town at all. I just don't know what happened to them all. If you were young and a member of the working class it became very difficult to get a real job and many, a great many wound up working in the so called 'service industries'. Serving customers in the retail shops or serving up food and drink in places which dispensed them. Bloody well demeaning most felt, unless those jobs had rescued them from a long stretch of unemployment. Despite what the government statisticians blabbered about the real income of working people was beginning to decline as well. Maybe it wasn't so obvious for some still living at home and not paying rents and having all their earnings to fritter away on whatever it was that enticed them, but for others it was already becoming hard times. Possibly not like the depression years but bad enough for many.

That decade also coincided with the demise of a great many of our union leaders as well, a lot of whom who had come up during the 1030s. It was generally a terrible time for unions as a whole; a deepening unemployment, a breakdown of already established unions ability to maintain decent pay scales, the phenomenal growth of all sorts of whipsy doodle crusades to engage the support of working people in all sorts

campaigns which were mainly to advance the particular interests of different sections of the bourgeoisie Green vegetarian, Zionist Nativism etc. etc. Oh my, 'educators' and other interested parties fulminating about the allegedly 'shameful' fact that only two thirds of high school graduates went on to complete degrees at universities. Weeping wailers galore! I'm about ready to cash out as the spirit of Vancouver now. What the hell ever happened to that combative spirit which Vancouverites once had.

We've got a Federal election coming up now, a choice between an out and out, dyed in the wool reactionary from southern Alberta who seems to think that aping Joe McCarthy is the way to run the country, and an utter, poll sniffing opportunist Nude Democrat who is possibly even more reactionary, plus a liberal Liberal running for the job as Prime Minister. If I were an elector I'd vote for Tommy Douglas as a write-in candidate. A dead Tommy Douglas would still be a better Prime Minister than any of the current live ones on offer.